american socialist monthly

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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., Required by the Acts of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933

Of American Socialist Monthly, published monthly, at New York, N. Y., for Oct. 1, 1936. State of New York, N. Y., County of New York, N. Y.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Anna Bercowitz, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Managing Editor of the American Socialist Monthly, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, American Socialist Monthly, 21 East 17th Street, N. Y. Editor, None; Managing Editor, Anna Bercowitz, 21 East 17th Street, N. Y.; Business Manager, Anna Bercowitz, 21 East 17th St., N. Y.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

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3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.) None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the twelve months preceding the date shown above is_____ (This information is required from daily publications only.) Anna Bercowitz, Managing Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of September, 1936. (Seal.) Milton Weinstein, (My commission expires March 2, 1938.)

The ASM assumes no responsibility for signed articles. Such articles express the opinion of the writers. The ASM strives to serve as a free forum for all shades of opinion within our movement.

american socialist monthly

Table of Contents

	Page
Labor Perspectives for the Convention Frank N. Trager	2
The Socialist Party Faces the Future Lillian Symes	11
What Shall Socialists Do About the Supreme Court Edward Grove	15
Men to Spain—The Eugene V. Debs Column Amicus Most	21
Pacifism and Its Critics Devere Allen	25
The British Labour Movement To-day G. D. H. Cole	31
People's Front Prepares War Gus Tyler	38
Honeymoon David P. Berenberg	43
The Socialist Convention: An Opportunity and a Challenge Harry W. Laidler	50
Socialists in the Workers' Alliance Brendan Sexton	53
Some Problems of Party Organization Robert Delson & Louis Mann	58
Book Reviews: Two Pamphlets David P. Berenberg	63

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Labor Perspectives for the Convention

Frank N. Trager

ANY resolution and machinery for socialist trade union guidance and activity expected at the coming Chicago convention should of necessity be based on the following considerations:

1. What is the present condition and probable immediate future for American industry?
2. What is the present condition and probable immediate future for the trade union movement?
3. What lessons emerge out of recent industrial battles?
4. What are the political forces and their relationship within the labor movement?
5. What is the role of the party and how can it be translated into action?

Obviously, no article can take the place of ample pre-convention discussion, and equally so, no single resolution at the convention can do justice to the manifold aspects of the subject.

I.

American Industry. Whereas the long-time factors of monopoly and imperialist capitalism are rapidly approaching a state of exhaustion and thereby intensifying the decline of capitalism, we in America are going through a cyclic recovery which has affected the entire community in varying degrees. This recovery is marked by a climbing (since 1933) production level plus a dangerous speculative boom in stocks and new financing in bonds. Carloadings, crude oil output, electric power output, iron and steel ton production and shipment, cotton consumption, etc., all show marked increase. Likewise postal receipts, demand bank deposits, automobile registrations and similar indices of consumer well-being move upward in scale.

This cyclic recovery must not be permitted to fool the working class because almost every phenomenon of depression remains as a chronic ailment. Still the reserve army of eight to ten millions unemployed; still the financial intervention of the capitalist state to bolster the shaky economic order; still the continuing features of declining, i. e., sick, industries (agriculture, coal, textiles). To these permanent features of the decline added testimony of a negative character comes from recent population and area studies by Carter Goodrich and Associates. They have demonstrated that the potentialities of intra-national migration in response to economic opportunity are virtually non-existent for any significant section of the population. Likewise they exploded the myth in part prepared by Tugwell and other New Dealers of decentralizing industry so as to accommodate hinterland population. Concentration in industry and finance have gone along with concentration of location in some 200 out of 3,000 counties in America. To all this must be added the inevitable lag between real wages and rising prices for the employed and the declining purchasing power of the unemployed—this latter is sharply accentuated by the Roosevelt relief and W.P.A. cuts.

That capitalism is in decline, that expansion factors are near recognizable terminals, that temporary cyclic recovery is both actual and unstable, that,

in short, capitalism cannot solve its inner contradictions and therefore necessarily attempts the explosive expedient of war at the very time it increasingly leans toward fascism to replace bourgeois democracy is daily more demonstrable.

II.

American Labor Movement. Within this framework the examination of the American labor movement must be made. The upward swing in the economic cycle brings with it an accelerated development of trade union organization and activity. Labor, slightly better fed, clothed and housed than it was in 1932-4, less fearful of *losing* its earning capacity as it usually is during the downward sweep of the cycle, prepares to regain its lost status and to remove some of the more obnoxious grievances suffered during the "low" period; speed-up, spy-system and to gain increased hourly rates, better working conditions, union recognition and collective bargaining.

It is thus the dynamics of objective conditions, including the dynamics of labor itself that now makes of the Tampa A. F. of L. convention a hollow thing. This is not to say that the cause of industrial unionism has been settled definitely *within the A. F. of L.* It is to say that the class struggle in America begins to insure victory for the cause of the C.I.O. and the principle itself. The metal and building trades craftists still retain by virtue of *convention decision* the control of the A. F. of L. Actually, by class struggle experience, formal motions, constitutional and jurisdictional convention decisions are being set aside.

To say that the class struggle is winning the battle for industrial unionism in no way belittles the role of the C.I.O. For example, it is fairly well known that the C.I.O. planned an assault against capitalist bosses about April 1. At that time the signing of new coal agreements between the operators and U.M.W.A. was to be a signal for simultaneous action in coal, steel and perhaps also in auto. Now socialists not only approve, but will strive for as a class-conscious measure, this policy of simultaneous strike and agreement action. Such a policy, whatever may be its rationalization when and if used by the C.I.O., is actually the preliminary training ground for the weapon of General Strike! However, the C.I.O. may not now be able to carry out this strategy because its hand was forced in auto by the early called strike against General Motors.

Rubber, glass, radio and electric power, maritime and shipyard, textile and steel, and, above all, auto battles, have deepened the class struggle in America, have contributed to the coming victory for industrial unionism.

As a result then of the events since Tampa, three well defined trends are clearly discernible within the organized labor movement.

1. **Reaction** and **Standpatism:** These twin evils of the trade union movement appear as hydra-headed monsters coming from the dark cave of the A. F. of L. executive council and its satellites. Both President Green and metal chief Frey intervened against the striking auto workers. Green publicly informed Governor Murphy that the auto union did not represent the workers and issued instructions to central labor bodies to refuse support to the strike. Ryan of the I.L.A. and recent supporter of the N. Y. American Labor Party, played a completely strike-breaking role in the Eastern maritime strike.

The following editorial, however, is a prize illustration of some of the worst

features of reactionary stultification. It comes from the January 23, *Organized Labor,* San Francisco:

"Green Follows Gompers' Lead"

"The strikes in the automobile industry are regarded in Washington as a serious menace to continued recovery, and the judgment of statesmen is that this is 'no time to upset our apple carts.' Obviously this government of ours does not believe in wars, nor strikes. William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, told the National Press Club on a recent occasion, that the power and strength, as well as the progress of organized labor, has been achieved through the policy of its first great leader, Samuel Gompers, of appealing to men's reason and their sense of justice. Green said that he had always followed that method of his predecessor, and he voiced his disapproval of precipitating strikes in no uncertain terms. Evidently a new brand of radicals have appeared as leaders with a determination to rule organized labor, no matter what the cost may be to the working men or to this nation.

"As Government resumes it seems certain that reform measures affecting industry—including employers and employes—will become major programs of the Roosevelt second term."

Bill Hutcheson's convention of carpenters and lumbermen carried reaction so far that it has of itself produced a marked change on the part of many locals of the Brotherhood. The campaign initiated by the *Socialist Call* and the Carpenters' League of New York with the cooperation of the national office against the Hitlerlike referendum now going the rounds among 300,000 carpenters and lumbermen has produced gratifying results in many sections of the country. There is little doubt that the referendum will be counted as "Ja" but in the same way that Hutcheson and General Secretary, F. P. Duffy, blusteringly gave in to some demands of the no-voice, no-vote northwest lumbermen when threatened by Delegate Duncan Campbell of Longview, Washington, with the loss of $150,000 in per capita so too will Hutcheson attempt to reef his sails when the storm of "Nein" sweeps around him.

2. **Progress: Industrial Unionism.** The Committee for Industrial Organization is now making an outstanding contribution to the cause of industrial unionism. Not only has it chartered two important independent unions (the shipyard and radio and electrical workers) but by its campaigns in steel, rubber, auto, glass and shoes, it is giving vivid testimony to its determination to organize the mass production industries.

It has brought to hundreds of thousands of workers new courage and new vision. It has inspired a movement for organization not only in as yet virtually untouched industries, e.g., packing, but also in established crafts in towns already affected by its mass organization campaigns, e.g., retail clerks in Akron.

This is not to say that all its policies are equally meritorious nor that it has planned and carried out with equal fullness the manifold tasks before it. Much remains for socialists and all other class conscious workers to offer constructive criticism so as to insure the ultimate victory. It should be the same searching sort of criticism a revolutionary party at all times applies to itself. But the party cannot afford to forget that any trade union of workers—C.I.O. or A.F. of L. is not a *revolutionary party.* A revolutionary party never engages in class-collaboration nor compromise with the forces of the capitalist state. A trade union, however progressive it may be, and despite its class composition, *until and if it becomes part of the revolutionary party or classless society* necessarily compromises with the capitalist state. To expect other than this is to suffer under a complete misunderstanding of the role of the trade unions in a capitalist society.

For the next immediate period the C.I.O. correctly enough is not only planning to continue its organization in the

mass production industries but will continue to set up regional councils of the C.I.O.

3. **Progress: Craft Unions:** The impact of the C.I.O. on the craft unions within the A. F. of L. is becoming more and more marked. In states such as Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, there are already groupings of C.I.O. and local craft unions that function together. This is carried on virtually as a parallel structure to reactionary controlled Central Labor Unions. In other places C.L.U.'s are going through a period of contest between industrial union minded craft, C.I.O. forces and anti-industrial union forces. Progressive blocks within the C.L.U.'s have scored notable victories in such cities as Chicago, Detroit, Akron, etc.

To these distinct trends a note is necessary on the railroad brotherhoods. The movement for "railroad unity" sponsored by the Communist Party has for all purposes been given up. A fresh start must be made to rebuild the militancy and industrial organization of railroad workers. Postponement of this task will tend to the increased government control and "ward-like" tendencies within the brotherhoods. The railway heritage of Debs may well be revived!

III.

Recent Industrial Battles

During December some 60,000 glass, radio, electrical, shipyard, auto, textile and marine workers were on strike. To these were added 125,000 in January—all auto workers. The significance of these strikes arises out of the facts that (1) they represent for the most part militant actions in industries unorganized a decade ago; (2) the new deal governors Earl and Murphy, both aspirants for the title of crown prince, used troops and state police in strikes; (3) in several important instances the technique of the sit-down as well as the militancy of the rank and file workers precipitated the larger issue of strike and served to change the direction of the strike, e.g., autos, from one that dallied in the negotiation rooms of Washington, D. C. hotels to the picket lines; (4) dangerous precedents with quasi approbation of top labor leadership were almost initiated, precedents which would have given the capitalist government the *legal* power to force negotiations and arbitration.

It is impossible here to examine—as should be done—all or even most of the contemporary industrial struggles. Actually each of the strikes warrant analyses and summary for future direction. The two most important of these are the recently concluded maritime strike and the current auto strike.*

1. The maritime strike (west coast) after three months of continuous and militant action concluded its referendum during the first week in February. Essentially the seven Pacific coast unions won their basic demands: retention of hiring hall contracts, increases in pay, decreases in hours and strengthened union recognition. The strike was severely endangered by three factors that sharply divided the unions and which undoubtedly will play a part in recasting the leadership of the Maritime Federation. These were (a) the hesitancy on the part of the Bridges' leadership to initiate the strike action on the termination of the old award (September 30) because of unrealizable expectations of Roosevelt and New Deal support; (b) the failure of this leadership in contra-

* It is interesting to note that although the current strike wave is important as a indication of labor's renewed strength, actually this strike wave is but *restoring* to labor some of its losses. The number of strikes for the years since 1928 has climbed from 17% to 57% as compared to 1916-1920 (base year 1916). The number of workers involved climbed from 10% in 1930 to 83% in 1936 (1916 base year).

distinction to the editorial policy of the Federation's paper, *"The Voice of the Federation,"* to brook nc compromise with the Copeland (Fink) maritime act; (c) the attack by Bridges upon the editor and editorial board of the *Voice* during the strike.

Harry Bridges, with the support of other militant and the Communist Party fraction on the West Coast, was the outstanding labor leader—class conscious and unafraid in 1934. He led the assault against the combined forces of T(ear) G(as) plant and the ship owners, the Hearst and other reactionary press, the strike breaking tactics and lynch spirit created by the then Roosevelt labor lieutenants, General Hugh Johnson and Assistant Labor Secretary McGrady. He rallied the waterfront and with the assistance of other militants forced labor support for the strike by means of the San Francisco general strike — this against the vicious, red-baiting, reactionary line of Vandeleur, Scharrenberg and company. At all times his militancy was matched but not excelled by the second ranking labor leader of the west coast, Harry Lundeberg of the Sailors Union of the Pacific.

The story now is different. Bridges, aided and abetted by the west coast Communist Party waterfront fraction, fought an unprincipled battle to remove Comrade Mayes as editor of the *Voice* and sought to discredit the leadership of Lundeberg and the S.U.P. His three charges against Mayes were based on the contention of forged references, shipment of 500 copies weekly of the *Voice* (value $15.00) to the S.U.P. by which the S.U.P. is alleged to have defrauded the Maritime Federation, and the continued editorial policy of Mayes against any compromise with the Copeland Fink Act.

The printed record of the testimony is telling against Bridges and the Communist Party Fraction. He failed to make out a case for his charges and at the same time displayed an amazing indifference to the first rule of strike strategy: workers solidarity. Instead of using his leadership to cement the present gains of the Maritime Federation looking toward the formation of a National Industrial Marine Union he has perverted his role in order to carry out the present disruptive policy of the Communist Party. He has made his peace with Vandeleur and actually urged the Sailors' Union of the Pacific to surrender its independence and re-enter the fink sailors' union still controlled by Scharrenberg, Olander, Grange and Hunter!

2. The Auto Strike: As this is being written, the end or the auto strike has arrived and the preliminary agreements between General Motors and the U.A.W.A. have been signed. This much can be uncontestably stated: that socialists played a major role in determining the future of the auto workers by their contribution to the class struggle policies carried out in Flint, Detroit, Cleveland, Toledo, Anderson and St. Louis. — to name no other places; that they played a major role in preserving the morale and heightening the militancy of the auto workers, especially in Flint—heart of the strike. There can be no doubt that the turning point in the strike—the strategy that made for success rather than failure—was the magnificent second battle of Flint when the workers took over Chevrolet Plant 4. The full account of this has not yet been written but the articles in the *Socialist Call* for January and February sufficiently carry the record. What is pertinent here is that such policy as socialists formulated and carried out was the result of the actual functioning of the new line of the party: disciplined socialist work on a

class struggle basis in mass organizations—through the active cooperation of the party machinery.

The strike settlement is in many ways a notable victory. That is not to say that more could not have been won for the strikers if the C.I.O. and Union leadership had not conducted their strategy more closely in connection with the scene of rank and file battle. But actually this agreement provides the following: A giant corporation *signed* an agreement with the Union; the agreement is in force for six months during which time the Union is the sole bargaining agency. This means that the Union has a definite period in which all of its energies and resources can be utilized in a mop-up organization campaign. If this is done properly, then at the end of the six months period there will be no doubt of the eventual outcome.

The Union officials cannot afford to let up for one minute either its vigilance or its suspicions of all General Motors and government activity. This was amply demonstrated in the post-agreement attacks on the union in Anderson, Ind. These attacks if not provoked by G.M. hired men could have been prevented if G.M. had acted in the spirit of its signed contract.

IV.

Political Forces. There are three well-defined political forces in the labor movement to-day.

1. **The C.I.O.** which in many ways dominates the progressive forces has not yet formulated a clearly articulated political philosophy. It is following a zig-zag course that primarily stems from its expected but disappointing pay-off on Roosevelt support. John Lewis took his presidential rebuke without whimpering but it was a rebuke. Roosevelt covered up two days later by slapping at Sloan but that was a typical Roosevelt maneuver. The C.I.O. has been unwilling to chart any uniform course for Labor's Non-Partisan League. It has in some states, e.g., Pennsylvania, Michigan, Kentucky, placed its full though naive faith in Democratic governors. In others it permits the Labor's Non-Partisan League to play with the idea of a state labor party, e.g., North Carolina, New York. Actually its net effect is to maintain the illusion that labor has something to gain from a supposed "liberal" Democratic Party. In this sense it is class collaborationist to a degree which may endanger the future of the organized workers in the mass production industries.

Twenty to thirty million men so organized and expecting occasional and imperfect legislative crumbs from capitalist parties may well become a bulwark of capitalism unless and until their ranks are skidded with class-conscious leadership which at this time can come only from the Socialist Party.

This opportunist political role within the C.I.O. has to a large extent befuddled the one time clear trade union perspectives of the Communist Party Opposition. The latter is so sure that the C.I.O. will become the base of a national labor party that it has practically abandoned its independent line within the movement. It made the first fatal mistake when it supported the New York American Labor Party; it will continue to make others unless it again changes its position. It might be said that if class-conscious workers within the C.I.O. pushed through democratic procedures the policy of independent working class political action they might have an effect on the C.I.O. This is true but it can and must be done only on the basis of no compromise with capitalist parties and politics.

2. **The Communist Party.** About two and one-half years ago the C.P. aban-

doned its old line of dual unionism and entered the ranks of the regular unions. It was expected—and in many instances carried out—that their reentry into the labor movement would mean that the Socialist Party and all class conscious forces would be strengthened. Later, to be specific on January 6-7, 1935, Browder declared that the C.P. was ready to build a labor party. These two significant changes marked the end of C.P. third period days—the end of union splitting, disruption, social-fascist theorization, etc.

But to-day—and even since the last congress of the Communist International, the trade union role of the C.P. has become not only confused and opportunist but in important instances reactionary and disruptive. It supported the racketeering leadership of the recent suicide, Max Pincus in the New York food workers' local. It has openly campaigned against any socialist with whom it disagrees or whom it charges with Trotskyism. It has tried to secure the removal of socialists who are trade union organizers. It has attempted to remove National Executive Board members from the Workers Alliance of America on charges that were so palpably false that they were overwhelmingly defeated by the rank and file. This, at a time when it gave objective aid to Roosevelt's relief policy on the false expectation that it would differ materially from Landon's! It has carried on a campaign of slander and vilification against the Party at the same time as it has raised a new version of the theory of social fascism, i.e., communo or Trotsky-fascism. This it has done at the same time that it refrained from taking a principled stand on the C.I.O. question in many craft unions.

It is indeed tragic to witness this degeneration of the Communist Party at the very time when its once revolutionary policies in and out of the trade union movement would have become sufficient grounds for ever-wider united fronts with revolutionary socialists. Its present policy is fatal only because it is Trotsky-baiting, not only because it attacks socialists, but mainly because it is creating in the mass mind of workers the undoubted impression that revolutionists are morally and psychically corruptible, that revolutionary parties exist only to furnish the unholy spectacle of inner civil war, thereby discrediting Socialism itself!

More and more it is becoming apparent that the essential failure of the Bolshevik—as distinct from the Socialist—tradition, the tradition of Lenin, Trotsky and above all, Stalin, is the failure to fight for inner-party democracy, to fight for inner-party freedom of speech, press and assemblage, to fight against that form of monolithicism which becomes under the leadership of Stalin ruthless, bureaucratic extirpation of all dissident opinion.

Thus it becomes the task of the Socialist Party in this connection to carry its historic position with renewed vigor and emphasis not only into the trade unions but also to the membership of the C.P.

3. **The Socialist Party.** The third force within the trade union movement is the Socialist Party. The party has been rebuilding its trade union forces on a policy foreshadowed more by the left wing than by the party itself. Actually we have sloughed off the old guard trade unionists whose sole connection to the party was nominal membership. During the last election campaigns there is no doubt that our position isolated us from the main stream of the trade union movement *only because we unlike every other political group would not support Roosevelt!* Our principled position *then*

is now getting daily confirmation which brings with it increased confidence—and with confidence new strength. Even those comrades who were regarded as electoral liquidationists have done two things: never deviated from a straight class struggle program on the economic trade union front and have to a large extent come to agreement with the central trade union tendency in the party; namely disciplined work through the party in the mass organizations.

V.

The Role of the Party and How Can It Be Carried Out

In this connection there is no need for repetition. I subscribe completely to "Party Perspectives—Number IV. Labor Forces in the United States." *Socialist Call,* January 23, 1936. Doubtless other formulations of this position will be made which may be acceptable but essentially it reduces to a simple proposition: Socialists in all places, including the trade union movement will fight for a class struggle policy on all issues that arise—these include relation to the government, the bosses and trade union leaders and rank and file. If the party as a revolutionary force directs the application of this policy its chances for success in workers' battles will be to a large extent enhanced.

This problem before the party is to create the necessary machinery to carry out the perspectives—and so to educate the membership that both the policy and its machinery do not become new sources of error—errors of mechanical application and mechanical discipline. Whatever machinery is established must take into account the realities of the labor movement and of the party. Obviously the geographical and organization struggle for and by labor will take place in the mass production industries. Equally obvious is it that the labor machinery of the party must be *created* and carried out by a virtually new and not too well experienced membership. Mistakes will be made but essentially the main line must be based on the clear perception of the primary political and organizational role of the party.

The trade union machinery for the party will require:

1. **National Trade Union Committee.** This committee subject to the convention policy and N.E.C. will of necessity have to operate continuously. A quorum of its members must be located in an area fairly close to the national office. Its job should consist of examining the state of the labor movement which includes not only ever occurring industrial struggles but also the condition and policies of respective A. F. of L. and C.I.O. national unions. This, so as to guide the policy and work of socialists within these unions. The personnel of the committee is extremely important for without adequate composition the labor work of the party will be severely hampered. Actually this committee should be large enough to include the work of comrades in the unemployed and W.P.A. fields.

2. **National Labor Secretarial Staff.** The present practice of combining the post of labor and organization secretary is not unsatisfactory even though there are arguments against it. For the success or failure of the party in the task of winning members from the organized, i.e., trade union working class will to a large extent determine the organization of the party. However, unless the national trade union committee divided its work so as to meet the organizational problems arising out of trade union activity *plus* those which were in addition to these the combination would not work. The advantage of having one labor

and organization committee and staff rests upon the degree of coordination that it could easily effect. The danger would arise if one or another of these tasks were subordinated out of all proportion to needs.

3. **Trade Union Publication.** Although this problem is inherently tied in with the whole question of press—a question that will not be solved until there is a nationally owned press with regional editions—there is need for one or another or all of the following: a trade union inner-party organ for discussion and report on trade union questions; inner-party trade union bulletins for each of the major internationals and our respective membership; sections of public organs devoted to this work. In this connection much thought must be given to the relationship of "news," "opinion," "discussion" and its public appearance. Both flexibility and discerning judgment must be exercised in order to avoid excesses of presentation or fear of presentation. We are not yet an underground movement nationally but in given instances not all the items can appear publicly. How to acquaint comrades with the situation is not an easy question to answer.

4. **Socialist Leagues.** It is a curious but familiar experience that re-occurs frequently. Proponents of a principle become opponents when it affects them. This is the case with socialist leagues in the trade unions. In the first place the majority of the articulate membership undoubtedly favors this type of organizational machinery to carry out socialist policies within the trade union movement. In this, however, many mistakes will be made—mistakes that arise partly because there has been little or no leadership in this field, partly because of conflicting opinion on particular policies. *But it doesn't follow that therefore we must scrap the general machinery of socialist leagues because there are errors of omission or commission. Nor can we for one minute permit the reentry into the party of the old guard concept of "hands off" and trade union autonomy even for three party members!*

A socialist league is a formal organizational set-up for all comrades in one local of a union. It need not be called that but it is the instrument subject to national and local labor committees through which our policies are carried out. All leagues within one national union should have a national league. It would be useful if all the leagues in one local would meet under the auspices of the local labor committees as a discussion body for inner educational purposes. In unions where our members are not numerous enough to set up a formal league there should be direction nonetheless from the labor committees to these members who operate as a fraction, i.e., part of a league yet to be formed.

No discussion of socialist leagues would be complete unless the relationship of leagues to other groupings in the union was indicated. This is not an issue which can be decided by a blanket policy. In any set of instances the independent, functioning Socialist Party league might (a) conclude a united front with a group within the union and, or, (b) be part of a larger generally progressive group within the union. In any case this decision should be made only after consultation with the labor committee.

Thus in summary it should be clear that the conduct of the Socialist Party policy in unions depends upon the careful organization and guidance of leagues. This should be done not by the secretarial staff alone but by the

labor committe and the most experienced comrades in the trade union field who are not necessarily trade unionists as such.

Short of this machinery, or its approximation, to talk of socialist work in mass organization of workers is meaningless. To carry it out needs training and collective leadership.

These then are the general and specific reflections for a developed labor policy. Properly carried out as has been done in isolated cases the S.P. will be able to gain a place by virtue of its class struggle policy in the labor movement—a place of leadership necessary if we are even to move along the road to power.

The Socialist Party Faces The Future

Lillian Symes

DURING the long and bitter struggle between Militant and Old Guard Socialists, there seemed to be at least one point of agreement between the two groups. It was embodied in the statement, "American Socialism is at the cross-roads." Wherever the line-up of forces was principled and intelligent, rather than merely personal and temperamental, both right and left wing, both social democrats and revolutionary socialists recognized that the issue involved was a decisive break with the social democratic tradition—a tradition which had never completely permeated the American party.

That particular controversy was resolved, not so much by the Cleveland Convention with its vain attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable, as by the series of breaks and desertions which followed it. While there may be still within the party individuals and groups who have remained in it because of organizational or personal loyalties and habit, the party as a whole has definitely broken with the dominant policies of the 1920s.

This fundamental break has helped to clarify the problem of the party's future but it has not solved that problem. Objective conditions, the world revolutionary movement, the American labor movement are changing too rapidly for simple and sudden adjustments. The revolt against Old Guardism bound together individuals and groups of varying tendencies and emphasis, whose differences were to create new problems once their common objective had been achieved. The incredible change—or rather acceleration of change—in the Communist Party during the past year has shifted the basis of our attitude toward that organization. The "united front" issue has become a "people's front" issue. The entry into the party of a highly disciplined and articulate group, many of whom had functioned for years as Communist Oppositionists has sharpened both organizational and theoretical problems. The emergence of labor or pseudo labor parties in various sections is pushing this ancient bone of contention out of the realm of abstract discussion into that of practical tactics. And it is obvious that on this subject there are differences of opinion, or at least of emphasis, even among those who call themselves "revolutionary so-

cialists." On other important issues—war, trade union activity, party organization and discipline, there is greater unanimity of opinion. But the practical application of our decision on all these points waits largely upon our answer to the question: What kind of a party do we want? What is its future role?

Unquestionably, the majority of our most active and conscious members will answer immediately: "We want a revolutionary Socialist Party." There is no room left in the political labor movement for any other kind of a party. The ground to the right is pre-empted by the Communist Party and the Social Democrats together with various amorphous liberal, progressive and labor alliances which may or may not assume independent form. As soon as the wholly illogical hangover of antagonisms between the first two groups begins to melt in the fire of political expediency, their informal alliance is inevitable. But the Socialist Party can play only one role, whether it does so in complete independence or functioning as a unit within a mass labor party—that of a political vanguard. In this role it has no competition whatever.

When we have said this much, however, we have settled nothing, for the question immediately arises—What is a revolutionary party? This point cannot be settled on a purely abstract basis, without consideration for objective realities, by repetition of revolutionary cliches, references to the Founding Fathers, the October Revolution, etc. We are supposed to be scientific socialists, not theologians and a scientific approach includes a critical examination and weighing not only of our own experience but that of other radical groups functioning in the same environment. Such an examination is all the more necessary because the strength of the emotional reaction against both Social Democratic and Stalinist opportunism has tended to induce a sort of revolutionary romanticism among many left-wing members who didn't happen to be around during First and Second Period Communism. The rose-colored glasses through which many nostalgic oppositionists view the years of their own orthodoxy as a period of revolutionary integrity, sweetness and light, have no place in the baggage of revolutionary realists. I will return to this subject later.

It is obvious that the party we want and need cannot be an all-inclusive party of the pre-1936 variety, not because such a party is inherently bad, but because it is historically passé. It had its place and performed its function during an earlier phase of capitalist development and socialist history. The present requires a party of action and clarity with general agreement, or at least disciplined unity, upon major tactics. It is also obvious, however, that a revolutionary party can not be monolithic. The Communist Party amply proves this point. The step from "democratic centralism" to bureaucratic control is so narrow that only the most intelligent and eternal vigilance, only complete inner democracy and freedom of discussion before decision, only a civilized tolerance on unessentials can keep a highly disciplined party from becoming a church. It was not merely the cleverness and ruthlessness of Stalin, but the religious fanaticism and unquestioning acceptance of dogma from above on the part of a sheep-like rank and file, the atmosphere of Jesuitry that prevailed throughout the movement and which sapped its moral fibre almost from the beginning, that has made the Communist Party what it is.

Intellectual clarity, a theoretically and

realistically correct line are basic essentials of a revolutionary party. But by themselves they are not enough. Whatever evasions and expedients may be necessary for work and survival in the class struggle against the common enemy, only complete honesty and integrity within our own ranks and in our relation to the working class generally can prevent that internal deterioration that breeds Ceasarism within and distrust without. Zinovievism is quite as fatal a disease to a revolutionary movement as is Stalinism. It is, in fact, its precursor. The seeds of "social fascism," the "united front from below," that slandering of opponents, that lying to the masses and to the party membership, that Jesuitical "splitting" of other organizations and that manoeuvering behind the scenes which came into full flower in the Third Period and made the Communist Party a stench in the nostrils of honest workers, were sown many years before. It was the beginning of this policy, as personified in Zinoviev, that so revolted John Reed that he resigned from the Comintern. A revolutionary Socialist Party has no place in it for the psychological hangovers of such a policy.

Still less is a revolutionary party merely a slightly enlarged edition of a revolutionary sect or an "opposition." The difference between a sect and a party is a difference not merely in size but in kind. A party cannot ignore its revolutionary rivals, because they often stand between it and the workers to whom it speaks—especially such a rival as the Communist Party with its enormous apparatus, its daily press, its wide-spread ramifications and its utter unscrupulousness. But neither can a party —as opposed to a sect—devote all or even most of its attention to such a rival. It has its own program, its own independent function and its attacks—offensive or defensive—upon such an organization must be incidental to the performance of that function.

Here too, if we are willing to examine and to admit our own mistakes and deficiencies, we have a right to examine those of others. When the new Workers' Party was formed from an almagamation of the Communist League of America and the infant American Workers Party the hope was born, not only within these two organizations, but among hundreds of unaffiliated radicals disgusted with both social democracy and official Communism, that here at last was the beginning of a new and healthy revolutionary party so long overdue—a happy combination of trained theoreticians, international revolutionists and experienced labor militants with an appreciation of American realities. No such development took place —and we have a right to ask why. Though it recruited certain new "oppositionists" from the Communist Party (some of whom it had to expel), within a few months the Workers Party had become a slightly enlarged version of the Communist League, torn by warring factions and weakened by successive splits.

Mere intellectual recognition that sectarianism, like social reformism, belongs to a past stage of revolutionary development, is not enough. The sectarian temperament is not so easily exorsized because it usually rationalizes itself as something else. At the moment, it seems to rationalize itself in the concept of the Party as a small, completely like-minded, highly disciplined group of professional revolutionaries and "footloose rebels", somewhat similar in character to the Bolshevik Party just prior to the 1917 revolution. This concept is a perfectly legitimate one under certain

objective conditions. But the question presents itself—do those objective conditions exist at this time and how near are we — in the United States—to a "revolutionary situation?" If such a situation is not imminent there is certainly no need to draw our lines so tightly that we drive out or alienate all those members who agree with our position but who cannot afford to function on a "war time basis."

We must reconcile ourselves, to be sure, to the fact that the Socialist Party is not likely to become a mass party in the near future and this fact alone is sufficient to lose us a certain number of members and supporters with no specific theoretical position of their own but who like to feel that they are in the main current—regardless of which way it is flowing—and who judge an organization's efficacy purely by its size and prosperity. Whether or not a national labor party develops by 1940, various state and local movements will attract many of such radicals. The Communist Party, which is fast becoming the Fabian Society of contemporary radicalism, will increase its support among liberal professionals and small-time intellectuals as it becomes increasingly apparent that it offers no serious threat to the status quo.

What the Socialist Party loses—or has lost—in quantity of membership, it will gain—as it has gained—in quality. This does not mean, however, that its recruiting or its propaganda should be aimed exclusively at ex-communists. We are not, and we should resist every tendency to make us, a mere Communist Opposition. The healthiest elements from other radical groups will find their way to the party as our position becomes clarified. But the woods are full of unrepentant Third Period communists looking for a place to go. We don't want a Third Period in the Socialist Party, under *any* name. At the recent national election, about 190,000 Americans voted the socialist ticket under circumstances which indicated a unique degree of clarity and loyalty. Even if a large proportion of these are discounted as "vague sympathizers," there still remains a substantial group toward whom our membership campaigns might be directed.

It will be unfortunate, for such a campaign and for our propaganda in general, if we throw away the baby of our socialist virtues with the bath-water of social democratic vices. The party has certain valuable traditions which ante-date the 1920s. Among our most valuable accomplishments was the ability to express ourselves simply to the uninitiated, to talk the language of the American working class. It took thirty years for American Socialism to accomplish this feat. The inferiority complex of many of our younger members in the presence of better trained theoreticians has a tendency to compensate itself in a verbal exhibitionism which carries over from internal discussion into our general propaganda. Even a vanguard party must make itself intelligible to the workers.

There is no space here in which to apply these generalities to the specific problems which the party must face in the near future. I will mention only one, briefly—the one upon which there seem so many different shades of opinion, the labor party. One may disagree —as does the writer—with those socialists who believe that it is our business to help form a labor party without being so utopian as to believe that we can oppose and denounce the labor party—any labor party—as counter-revolutionary and treacherous and then expect to be taken in when we decide

that it is powerful enough to warrant our attention. If our relation to the labor party is—as the writer believes —a tactical issue to be settled on the basis of time and circumstances—our membership must at least have some concrete notion of what those times and circumstances are. A revolutionary party cannot be evasive on such an issue. Nor can a party which expects to maintain the respect of the workers play a purely Machiavellian role in such a movement. The Communist Party tried this "manoeuver" in 1924—and proved that it was impossible to maintain one attitude in private and another in public.

The future of the Socialist Party depends largely upon the ability of the active members to keep their heads during the next six months, to clarify for themselves a concept of the party's function and to appraise correctly the objective conditions in which it must operate. Certain problems — such as that of the People's Front—should have been settled forever by the experiences of the French workers in the past year. Others will need to be tackled without benefit of such concrete object lessons. Revolutionary parties are not achieved overnight. Our future effectiveness depends upon our becoming a revolutionary party without—in the process—becoming a revolutionary sect.

What Shall Socialists do About the Supreme Court?

Edward Grove

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S sudden determination to take the bull by the horns and "do something" about the Supreme Court has caught many critics by surprise and has thrown them into great confusion. His solution has been hailed by those who should know better (the Communist Party) and condemned by those who should also know better (big business).

If his proposals have done nothing else they have served to bring once more into the open the multiplicity of schemes and solutions which have been brewing in various quarters to "reform" the Court. The Socialist Party should not neglect the rare opportunity of evaluating and exposing them for what they are, and coming out with a clear, clean-cut, principled position on the Supreme Court which it will not be ashamed of to-morrow, the next year, or a decade hence.

There is no end to the propositions which have been concocted. Here are the most significant ones which have been put forward. To the uninitiated it almost comes down to this: "You pays your money and you takes your choice!"

1. Compel Supreme Court judges over 70 years of age to retire.
2. Pack the Court; that is, enlarge it by the appointment of additional pro-New Deal judges.
3. Limit the scope of the Court by act of Congress to matters of original jurisdiction only.
4. Pass a Farmers' and Workers' Rights Amendment which will enlarge the powers of Congress to legislate on social and economic matters formerly declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.
5. Amend the Constitution to allow Congress to override by a 2/3 vote a decision of the Supreme Court.

6. Have Congress impeach all Supreme Court judges who declare its laws unconstitutional.

7. Abolish the Supreme Court's right of judicial review.

Let us examine the premises underlying each of these plans and note their implications and consequences.

Compel Old Judges to Retire

The attempt to solve the Supreme Court problem by retiring old judges is the makeshift of makeshifts! Its underlying assumption, that *age* has rendered the Court judges incapable of resolving the issues of the day in terms of a changing social order, is false to the very core. The Van Deventers, the Sutherlands, the Butlers and the McReynolds are acting in terms of a social philosophy which has nothing to do with their ages. Twenty-five years ago they held to precisely the same beliefs they expound to-day. Essentially they are corporation lawyers with a big business philosophy which they give expression to in their decisions. That they happen to be getting on in years is true but irrelevant. The high esteem in which some of the liberal judges are held is further proof that age has nothing to do with the case. Advancing years have not hardened the philosophical outlook of Brandeis (age 80) nor Cardozo (age 66); these jurists manifested a quarter of a century ago the same approach to constitutional questions which they show to-day.

In urging the appointment of younger judges, it must be remembered that there is no reasonable certainty that their outlook will be more favorable to the needs of the workers of America than those they are displacing. There are dozens of young lawyer-politicians who have helped Farley elect Roosevelt to whom a Supreme Court justiceship would be the very thing. They have already cast longing eyes in that direction. Since politics would thus play its part in dispensing such choice plums, how permanent will the benefits be which are derived from such a short-sighted policy? As between Mr. Farley's young friends and the old judges now on the bench, there may be very little to choose.

Pack the Court

Stripped of all its trappings, the Roosevelt plan of reforming the Court boils down to this: if the old judges (over 70) won't retire, pack the Court with judges sympathetic to the New Deal who will not invalidate the social and economic amelioratives and will permit the g-r-e-a-t experiment to go on unimpeded by judicial obstacles.

This proposal, considered together with, or independent of, the former one, is also a fly-by-night scheme. Packing the Court is not a new idea, nor are Roosevelt's justifications (more judges will lighten the burden of work) novel. Talk of this kind has been perennial. In almost every administration where a conflict arose between the legislature-executive and the judiciary, threats of packing the Court were wildly flung about. In Lincoln's days (March 1863), the size of the Supreme Court was enlarged from nine to ten, presumably to lighten its burden (at a time when secession and the Civil War had perceptibly eliminated much of its work!) but actually to reduce the influence of the Court's pro-slavery judges. Several years later (July 1866) the size of the Court was again reduced to nine when Lincoln's successor—President Johnson—and the Senate did not see eye to eye on the leading questions of the day, and the latter did not wish to give the President any opportunity for further appointments to the Bench. (Warren, The Supreme Court in U. S. History, Vol. II, pp. 379-380, 422-423.)

There is an additional factor to be considered. At the time judges are ap-

pointed, there is no guarantee that they will render the kind of decisions they were presumably appointed to render. Time and again new members of the Court have lost little opportunity to go over to the camp of the enemy. Presidents Jefferson and Madison, agrarian Democrats and staunch anti-Federalist in their day, hoped to stave off the Supreme Court's industrial-capitalist decisions by the appointments they made to vacancies on the Bench. But, to their chagrin, judge after judge capitulated to the Federalist philosophy of Chief Justice John Marshall, American industrial-capitalism's first great constitutional expounder.

Lincoln's appointees, five in number, likewise soon lost all vestiges af obligation and emancipated themselves from the Emancipator. They, too, followed all the old traditions. Nothing of a radical nature came from them to disturb the tranquility of those who feared postwar upheavals. The result was clearly the other way, as was evidenced in the Milligan case, decided in 1866, shortly after the death of Lincoln. A unanimous Court held that the military tribunals set up by Lincoln during the Civil War were illegal in those places where Civil Courts already existed. President Johnson interpreted this decision to mean that military government in the South must be ended. As a result, the Court found itself widely denounced throughout the North. Proposals were then and there made to swamp the Court with new appointees or take away its appellate jurisdiction. (Warren, Op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 447-449.)

Those who favor packing the Court or changing its personnel by age limitations must recognize that historical episodes, in a general way, sometimes reoccur. The most enlightened pro-New Deal judge of 1937 (assuming you can be sure you have them!) may become quite reactionary when confronted with new issues in 1940.

There is still one more point which cannot be overlooked. The pendulum of American politics continuously swings from Democrats to Republicans to Democrats to Republicans. American workers have not yet lost faith in the old parties. There is a strong possibility that the election of 1940 may see an anti-New Dealer elected to the presidency. (Socialists know the New Deal can't succeed; barring fascism, its failure will probably carry into office on the crest of a reactionary wave another Hoover whose voice will cry from the wilderness and proclaim that only a return to the rugged individualism of the Fathers will save the country!) The 1940 savior (defeat Roosevelt at all costs!) may decide to do some packing of his own. And then where are we?

Socialists must also make clear that, when all is said and done, there is no significant distinction in their eyes between putting liberals or conservatives on the Bench. Because these judges lack a definite working-class philosophy and program, neither can be depended upon. Basically the liberals and the conservatives stand for the system of private initiative, private enterprise and private profit—in a word, capitalism. They differ only in respect to where one draws the line on what constitutes a threat to the status quo. Conservatives maintain that economic and social legislation quickly becomes a danger; liberals do not, and on the contrary often imply that these are the very measures which save it. In a crisis, when it comes to a showdown, liberals and conservatives stand firmly united. During the World War, outspoken radicals were sentenced and convicted for distributing anti-war literature, in violation of the

Espionage Act. When the issue was brought before the Supreme Court, the convictions were upheld. The Great Liberal, Justice Holmes, wrote the opinion for the *unanimous* Court. (Schenck vs. U.S., 249 U.S. 47, 1919.)

Limit the Scope of the Supreme Court to Matters of Original Jurisdiction

Since Congress controls the organization of the Court, as established by Section 25 of the Ellsworth Judiciary Act of 1789, it has been argued that the Court's powers can be limited to cases of original jurisdiction only, thus depriving it of the right to review cases on appeal. Such clamor for limitation of jurisdiction arose after the unpopular Dred Scott decision (1857), the Ableman vs. Booth case (1859) and the Milligan case, already discussed. (Warren, Op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 333, 448-9.) It is being urged again to-day. Although logically plausible, it is a poor risk for those who wish to limit the power of the judiciary. In the last analysis, this Congressional statute will have to be debated before the very tribunal it wishes to abolish, to determine its constitutionality. It seems scarcely possible that the Court will be less astute where its own existence is at stake than it has been in deciding other comparatively lesser-important questions.

Pass a Farmers' and Workers' Rights Amendment Which Will Enlarge the Powers of Congress

The Farmers' and Workers' Rights Amendment is being urged at present by the Socialist Party as the way out of the impasse. In June 1936, an article written by me ("The Hillquit Amendment Is Not Enough") appeared in the *American Socialist Monthly*. In that article I argued these propositions at length: Considering the basic nature of the Court (the Supreme Executive Committee of American capitalism), and also its previous decisions where other amendments were involved, it seems fairly conclusive that an iron-clad amendment which cannot be subverted by the Court is impossible; nothing short of the abolition of the judicial veto will give workers under capitalism anything near the kind of protection they need, want and should get.

The Farmers' and Workers' Rights Amendment is the old Hillquit Amendment with a few additional patches stuck on. There is nothing about it which merits our confidence that it will succeed where other amendments have failed. It includes two additional clauses: One providing for collective bargaining, and another to allow Congress to "legislate generally for the social and economic welfare of the workers, farmers and consumers." The former clause eliminates some of the loopholes for the Court to crawl through, and closes somewhat the wide gap discussed by me in that article. A brief re-reading of the U. S. Supreme Court decisions cited on page 16 of that article will show that organized labor will *still* be at the mercy of the Court in such basic matters as picketing, sit-down strikes, organizing boycotts, etc.

The social and economic welfare clause added can be dismissed even more curtly. Such clauses in the past have been turned and twisted about to suit the fancy of the Court. When legal students like Professor Morris R. Cohen categorically declare that the Constitution can't be amended to stop Supreme Court dictatorship, it's time to call a halt to a Farmers' and Workers' Rights Amendment. (New Leader, May 30, 1936, p. 5.) One can only hope that enough members of the Socialist Party with adequate legal training will study the question thoroughly and

urge a reconsideration of the Socialist Party position.

It is gratifying to find that Norman Thomas, the most stalwart defender of the Farmers' and Workers' Rights Amendment, is perceptibly, if not appreciably, weakening in his support of this measure. He still says:

"I find it difficult to accept the argument that the courts, so long as they are allowed any judicial review, will be able to nullify such an amendment."

But he admits that " . . . the amendment must be strengthened in its wording, especially in relation to the just-compensation and due-process-of-law clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments as they have been interpreted." (New Republic, Feb. 10, 1937, p. 21.)

Just who will undertake to strengthen the wording, and how? This is the question. Each addition will create further sources of difficulty and confusion. That, at any rate, is the weight of opinion among jurists of the calibre Norman Thomas respects.

There is this last bit of consolation. He finally declares:

"If nothing can be done without stripping the Supreme Court of power, then I should favor a clear-cut denial of that power rather than a provision that the judicial veto may be overruled by a two-thirds vote of Congress . . ." (idem)

Amend the Constitution to Allow Congress to Override by a Two-thirds Vote a Decision of the Supreme Court

This proposal derives from a similar (but not identical) one suggested in 1787 by James Madison who urged that the Supreme Court together with the president be permitted to exercise a veto over Congressional legislation which could be subsequently overridden. (Journal of the Constitutional Convention, p. 533.) Its leading proponents to-day are Edward S. Corwin, Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, and Morris L. Ernst, labor attorney. The strength of this approach derives from the implicit recognition of some of its proponents that the issue of Supreme Court dictatorship cannot be resolved by altering the personnel of the Court nor by attempting to enlarge the powers of Congress. The chief objection to it is that it retains the thoroughly discredited system of checks and balances to act as a brake upon the people's representatives. Socialists who accept the class character of the state do not believe that Democrats and Republicans in Congress are genuinely representative of the interests of the farmers and workers of America. But in urging a change from the status quo they should not put themselves down on record as endorsing a proposition which gives an appointed oligarchy *any* check upon the elected popular tribunal, even only if nominally representative.

Norman Thomas points out a more practical difficulty:

". . . the courts would probably not accept defeat in a particular law as setting a precedent. They might keep on nullifying legislation, not all of which could be passed over their veto. The resultant confusion of the legal pattern would be extraordinary." (New Republic, Feb. 10, 1937, p. 21.)

Have Congress Impeach All Supreme Court Judges Who Declare Its Laws Unconstitutional

This suggestion emanates from the pen of Louis Boudin, a Marxist and juridical critic whose extended analyses of the class nature of the Court are excellent. He rightly points out why a Farmers' and Workers' Rights Amendment (he doesn't specifically refer to it as such) is a pipe dream:

" . . . For, so long as the Supreme Court has the power to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional, *there is no way of telling in advance* what the Supreme Court would do with *any* amendment. And I say, after spending a lifetime studying the subject, that no

lawyer is clever enough so to phrase an amendment as to make it impossible for the courts to emasculate it, or even to misuse it for different purposes . . . " (*American Socialist Monthly,* Oct. 1936, p. 43-44.)

Boudin's solution is based upon these premises: (1) A quick, practical way out is necessary. (2) A constitutional amendment abolishing judicial review is "centuries off." (3) The Court never had the right of judicial review under the Constitution anyway.

He proposes a return to the Constitution in the quickest possible way: "Make the Supreme Court obey the Constitution." This is to be accomplished by instituting impeachment proceedings against all judges who vote against the constitutionality of acts of Congress.

" . . . Under the Constitution, Congress has therefore the *power* and in my opinion the *duty,* to impeach and remove from office any judge who violates the Constitution by presuming to nullify a law duly passed by Congress and approved by the President." (Ibid., p. 46.) (Italics in the original)

As an alternative, he offers another equally speedy, solution. He suggests that the Court be packed from nine to fifteen judges (" . . . in order to convert the Supreme Court into a body which would renounce that power (of declaring acts of Congress unconstitutional—E.G.) by a formal decision by a vote of nine to six . . . ") (Ibid., p. 46.)

Boudin is without question sound in holding to the impossibility of formulating a specific amendment which will be able to accomplish what its proponents want. He is also probably correct in arguing that an amendment calling for the abolition of judicial review would stand little chance of passing immediately. (Others have pointed out that 13 states with less than 5% of the population could effectively block such an amendment.) But let us look at the debit side of the ledger. (1) His contention that judicial review is usurpation, and was never intended, is regarded as a debatable question among those members of Congress whom he must reach. Even those who agree with him on this score would still argue that impeachment cannot be legally used as a political instrument without in turn violating the very document he is appealing to. Such proceedings must be based upon malfeasance and not merely upon imputation of bad faith alleged against those who happen to disagree with the Boudinian conception of the constitution. (2) It is highly unlikely that his proposals could be effected any more easily than a constitutional amendment abolishing judicial review. Congress, the Democratic and Republican parties (all of whom, by the way, still stand for capitalist democracy!) as they are now constituted would not resort to any such drastic and constitutionally questionable methods as he proposes. Only a fascist government or a revolutionary Workers' Congress would dare attempt such action. Rightly or wrongly so, even among the working class, many sections stand for strict adherence to constitutionalism and still look to the Constitution as their defender against tyranny, oppression and fascism. An amendment calling for the abolition of judicial review would constitute an even more effective rallying cry just because the method called for is constitutional and does not raise any alarm of dictatorship and fascism, to which interpretation Boudin's proposals in theory as well as in fact lend themselves.

Abolish the Supreme Court's Power of Judicial Review

Marxian socialists must never lose sight of their fundamental truths. Basically, they are out to destroy the capitalist system and not merely to amend the constitution. No solution of the issue, whether the Court emerges dead or alive, will bring the new society nor

permanently lighten the burden of the working class. Immediate demands are necessary for involving the workers in the class struggle, but the issues raised must never deceive. Instead of feeding workers promises and pious hopes, the Socialist Party must always offer a clear analysis of underlying realities, take a principled position and fight for it. This is the beginning and end of all wisdom. Viewed in this light, what stand must socialists take on the Supreme Court issue? *Nothing short of the destruction of the power of the Court to void acts of Congress which do not conform to its own conceptions of what the law should be.*

What are the values of such a stand? (1) It is clean-cut, honest and forthright. It truthfully proclaims that nothing else will succeed, that workers had better not delude themselves into thinking that there is any easy way of cutting off the right arm of American capitalism. (2) Whether or not socialists win their point and get such an amendment adopted, they are in a position to hammer away at elementary Marxian truths. The evil is neither the Supreme Court nor the Constitution, but the capitalist system. Only through elimination of judicial review can workers and farmers strike a significant blow at the root of this evil.

Socialists who hope to adopt a position which will successfully carry had better forget about the class struggle, hop on the Roosevelt bandwagon, and come out for packing the Court. Otherwise there is only one way to meet the issue squarely, be true to one's principles and be honest with the American worker: the Supreme Court's power of judicial review must be destroyed.

Men to Spain—The Eugene V. Debs Column

Amicus Most

"In its struggle for a new society, the Socialist Party seeks to obtain its objectives by peaceful and orderly means. Recognizing (however) the increasing resort by a crumbling capitalist order to fascism to preserve its integrity and dominance, the Socialist Party intends not to be deceived by fascist propaganda or overwhelmed by fascist force. It will do all in its power to fight fascism of every kind all the time and everywhere in the world, until fascism is dead. It will rely upon the organization of a disciplined labor movement."—Declaration of Principles, Socialist Party, U.S.A.

AT Detroit in 1934, the Socialist Party adopted a Declaration of Principles that marked the beginning of the party's break with reformism and its emergence as a revolutionary organization. Many non-socialist radicals thought and stated that the Declaration consisted merely of words, used in order to appease the leftward surge of the party's rank and file. Since that time the party has increasingly demonstrated in action that it was ready to assume its revolutionary role seriously. The latest illustration of this is when it initiated the "Friends of the Debs Column" which is helping to furnish transportation for a group of 500 men and women volunteers with medical, military and technical experience who are going to Spain to form the Eugene V. Debs column as part of the International Column fighting against Franco.

Although the Socialist Party initiated and is giving its hearty support to the Friends of the Debs Column, that organization is entirely separate from the party. Its sponsors include such well known people as: Upton Sinclair, Dor-

othy Kenyon, James T. Farrell, Sidney Hook, Leroy Bowman, Louis Boudin, Roger Baldwin, Carlo Tresca, V. F. Calverton, Norman Thomas, F. Philip Randolph, Isidore Laderman, Lillian Symes, Roy Burt, Tucker P. Smith, Murray Baron, Max Delson and many others representing all shades of political opinion and labor, literary and liberal circles.

The announcement of the Debs Column brought immediate attacks from all sides. Hearst, the Roosevelt administration, some leading pacifists, the old-guard New Leader, the Communist Daily Worker—all joined the chorus. Socialists were not surprised, but understood clearly that the philosophies and tactics represented by each of these forces would of necessity lead them to an attack on any really revolutionary act.

The attack of Hearst, the leading self-avowed defender of fascism in America, is easily understandable. He will fight with all his demagogy and power against any action undertaken on behalf of the working class.

The administration had no legal grounds that it could use to stop the Debs Brigade. The Friends of the Debs Column are not recruiting or soliciting volunteers. They are merely furnishing transportation to class-conscious men of character and training who, of their own free will and with no remuneration whatsoever, desire to go to Spain. These people will not swear allegiance to the Spanish government or join the Spanish army. They will make arrangements in Spain to form the Debs Column and to join the International Column. Having no legal grounds, the government, therefore, attempted to prevent these working men from going by various "scare" devices. It issued a series of statements in the press announcing Department of Justice investigations and passport restrictions. It sent G-men to various Socialist Party headquarters. It widely publicized its questioning of the flyer, Bert Acosta, upon his return from Spain and Senator Pittman and Representative Dickstein called for new laws to prevent the action of the Friends of the Debs Column. The government attempted to use bluff, but when the Friends of the Debs Column insisted on carrying on work, the government was forced to admit that it had no legal ground.

The government's acts again illustrate what socialists have always pointed out —that a capitalist government, no matter how liberal it might pretend to be, in a crucial struggle between the working class and the owning class will line up with that side with whose economic interests it is identified. Americans have not been prevented from fighting for every would-be South American dictator, or from joining the Chinese Army, French Foreign Legion, Mussolini's army in Ethiopia, and every European army before America entered the World War. The recent hysterically passed "neutrality" legislation, together with the official frown upon the Debs Column, clearly shows the administration's bias in favor of the fascist Franco, for these acts can only help him by hurting the legally elected Spanish Government. Franco can obtain all the help he wants from Hitler and Mussolini while the great "democracies" of the world block aid to the workers of Spain.

John Haynes Holmes and the Fellowship of Reconciliation led the pacifists' attack. They argued for conscientious objection to participation in any form of violent conflict—be it international war, civil war, or class war. They stated that we must keep the United States

out of war by strict "neutrality," and that this act was in violation of the socialists' historic anti-war position. The Socialist Party has always been and still is opposed to war and violence per se, but it is not opposed to using force when it is necessary in order to defend the working class against the violence of the capitalist class. The Socialist Party fervently wants peace, but it knows that peace can never be achieved under capitalism. Therefore, every victory for Socialism and every defeat of fascism is a victory for peace. A victory for Franco will be a victory for Hitler and Mussolini. It will raise their prestige at home and abroad, help defeat the underground movement in Germany and Italy, and create a new center for world fascist aggression. After Spain comes Czechoslovakia, and after Czechoslovakia—France, and having thus destroyed the last vestige of the limited form of capitalist democracy the united fascist powers will turn upon the Soviet Union. Socialists are opposed to every capitalist imperialist war but are not neutral in the class war. We are definitely on the side of the worker—when our comrades are on the barricades in Russia, or Austria, or Spain—we, too, are on the barricades. As Herbert L. Matthews, the New York Times Madrid correspondent, quoted one of the members of the International Column saying, "the main battlefield of the international war against fascism is at the present moment in front of Madrid."

What alternatives do the pacifists offer? Should the Spanish workers throw away their arms, or lie down in the streets and refuse to fight? Should they all join the Red Cross, who would be left to do the fighting, and besides, is that not as much a form of participation in the war as those who go to the trenches? The German workers failed to fight and now they are enjoying the peace of Hitler. No, the Spanish workers had no choice but to fight, and the duty of socialists and all enemies of fascism is to assist in that fight.

The Debs Column cannot possibly involve the United States in any war. Workers do not rely upon the capitalist government to fight their battles, but upon their own strength and organization. When the bankers need protection for their foreign investments the bankers government will send the Marine Corps. But the courageous workers who will join the Debs Column know that the capitalist American government has no interest in defending the Spanish workers and any interference on its part can only be on the side of Franco.

The old-guard socialists and the communists agree with us that aid must be given to the Loyalists, but they want this to be done secretly. They want men to be sent by some sort of subterfuge, such as—sending "carpenters, engineers, etc." If it is done openly, they argue, it will encourage reactionaries to press for prohibitive legislation and it will make the fascists send more aid to the other side. They accuse the Socialist Party and all those who are supporting the Friends of the Debs Column of being publicity hounds. Has the neutrality of France and England stopped Hitler from sending aid? On the contrary, it has encouraged him. Is publicity about helping the workers a bad thing? Of course not! These are not the real reasons for their attacks—they are afraid it might embarrass their liberal front and show up Roosevelt. It might illustrate the falseness of a People's Front that includes liberals and non-working class elements. The communists want to avoid anything that might disturb the possibility of an open or an implied alliance of the the United States with England

and France in a "security pact" with Russia. Neither of them wishes to hurt their alliance with "respectability."

Those who argue for secrecy forget the very essence of Marxism. Modern Socialism is not a Blanquist secret conspiratorial movement. Only in fascist countries, where it is impossible to do otherwise, must it resort to secret, underground work. The achievement of Socialism requires the widest mass support. The masses must know what is being done if they are ever to be brought into action against capitalism. The workers will follow that party which shows that it is capable of leading in the fight for their demands. Immediate widespread and enthusiastic response to the announcement of the Debs Column proves that the class-conscious American workers want real help to go to Spain. The workers have learned through the bitter experiences of the German and Austrian working class that fascism can only be fought with its own weapon. When the fight against fascism in this country reaches the critical stage it will rally around that party which has shown by its past activities that it means business and knows how to fight.

It is true that 500 men in the ranks of the Loyalist forces cannot win the war, but 500 American workers will have a tremendous moral and psychological effect upon the Spanish Loyalist forces. Louis Fischer, in the *Nation* writing from Spain, recently explained how a few thousand members of the International Column were able to inspire the whole of Spain and to turn the tide of the war. The American working class must show its solidarity with their Spanish comrades by its physical presence in the ranks of the International Column. It must join the fighters sent by the British Independent Labor Party, by the Swiss, Belgian and French Socialist and Communist Parties and by every section in the international working class movement. It must follow the great traditions of the fighters for liberty through the ages. Lafayette, Pilsudski, and Steuben joined the American Revolution. Marx in his "Revolution and Counter Revolution" describes how in 1848 Robert Blum of the Frankfort Assembly became one of the leaders, of, and later died on the barricades in the Vienna insurrection. John Reed and many other Americans went to help in the Russian Revolution. Countless thousands of others have not hesitated to give their lives for the cause of liberty and Socialism. The Socialist Party of the United States, in line with its historic role, joins the ranks of these fighters and in the words of Eugene Debs says, "I refuse to obey any command to fight for the ruling class, but I will not wait to be commanded to fight for the working class."

TO OUR READERS

This issue is unfortunately very much delayed by a number of untoward circumstances. The editorial staff asks the indulgence of its readers. With this number, Volume V is completed. Although marked No. 9 to conform with postal regulations, a complete volume of 394 pages has been issued.

Pacifism and Its Critics

Devere Allen

INEVITABLY, the rising fascist menace has placed pacifism on the defensive; and the Spanish crisis has brought a growing issue to its climax.

Pacifists have long been under fire from the Right, partly because they could never join in the adulation of "collective security" which relied on war and imperialistic governments to protect the world from aggression, and partly because they have increasingly insisted that war was immediately inseparable from policy and fundamentally inseparable from the economic order. For this reason, pacifists have been close to the Left in most Socialist Parties, while the conservatives, like Jim Maurer here, have fulminated against the Left because it contained "too many damned pacifists." It has been the pacifists, equally within the peace movement as a whole and in the socialist movement also, who have emphasized ceaselessly the need of peace action based on drastic economic change and on militant labor activity against war. They have been making headway, if work in mass organizations is of any value; whereas in 1929 a nation-wide conference of pacifists turned down a resolution urging cooperation with the labor movement, virtually every pacifist body in the country to-day carries on active work for peace with labor, as well as on behalf of labor, and in a vast majority of these instances, socialists hold strategic places.

Pacifists may legitimately be excused, therefore, when they recoil in confusion and dismay before an onslaught from the Left. The attack has been widespread, unrestrained, and none too well informed. Liberals, as for example Bruce Bliven in "The New Republic," have held lugubrious funeral services over pacifism, yet chiefly describing the forms of peace activity against which most pacifists have struggled—without much help from their present critics—for a score of years. Vera Micheles Dean in "The Nation" poses some questions for pacifists which appear to leave them in the hole—yet chiefly because the procedures urged by pacifists have not been seriously undertaken.

More recently the same sort of thing has cropped up in many socialist circles, the usual type of argument being to erect a straw effigy and then to topple it. Whatever crticism may justifiably be levelled at such organizations as the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the War Resisters' League, to mention only a few, no one who knows anything about their work can dispute the fact that they have been carrying on a persistent and sometimes decidedly fruitful campaign against imperialism, race prejudice, the suppression of free speech, and the warlike and war-breeding aspects of the present economic order. It is an objective fact that while few Spanish socialists and liberals were urging freedom for the Moors, for instance, the small but radical organization of war resisters in Spain was working on a program which, if put into operation, would have made the rise of fascism in Spain infinitely

less likely. It was such pacifist magazines as "The World Tomorrow" in this country which were attacking the policy of our State Department toward the Spanish Republic, and pointing the basic issues in Spain (with undue optimism, it must be conceded) when the American socialist movement seemed scarcely aware that anything of importance was brewing in the faraway Iberian Peninsula.

It cannot be denied, however, that although the pacifist movement had supplied at least a partially sound programmatic basis for the prevention of fascism and war in Spain, in the face of actual events pacifists throughout the world have been singularly unconstructive in suggesting practicable alternatives to armed defense. The representatives of the War Resisters' International in Spain, on the outbreak of the conflict, instantly placed themselves at the service of the working-class leaders, not in a military capacity, but with complete willingness to accept positions of hardships and danger. Yet such an action, while calculated to dispel the usual superficial criticism of pacifists, scarcely provides more than individual solutions for the problem; for if all the workers of Spain had immediately opposed the tide of fascism by healing the wounded, working to secure an adequate food supply, and taking risks to maintain communications, Franco's army would have long since been in power in every square foot of Spanish territory. There might indeed have been fewer lives lost in the struggle, but fascism would reign supreme for years to come, medievalism would have triumphed over enlightenment, armed fascist rebellions against democratically elected governments would have been encouraged everywhere, and, in all probability, a vast new world war would have been brought closer.

A bulletin from the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, after asserting that all members of the organization must "feel an instinctive sympathy with those who have been attacked, with the poor people of Spain, so long oppressed and now fighting in the belief that they are defending the cause of justice and liberty," still has nothing constructive to offer as an emergency alternative to what the Spanish workers have been doing. The discussion of the Spanish conflict boils down to an admission of failure: "Words? Perhaps, and our powerlessness is our condemnation." The Fellowship in this country issued a statement to the press containing some hasty and some cogent criticisms of the Debs Column, but in which it discussed not one single alternative to the armed defense of the Spanish government. It did express its "feeling of humiliation and penitence for our own shortcomings in the work for social justice and peace." Most other organizations seem to have been bogged in the same quagmire. As a member of the Fellowship's international council in 1930 and 1931, I can recall urging upon the F. O. R. the great importance of Spain, asking for work there to promote war resistance, but receiving no encouragement. I could not then, I cannot now escape the conviction that the reason was not only lack of money, or preoccupation with Franco-German relations, but largely because, as I emphasized, no peace work in Spain could be honestly done unless done in cooperation with the labor movement that was often anti-clerical and which would have to be openly supported in its economic objectives.

The difficulty confronted by pacifism varies according to the nature of the pacifism involved. Somewhat arbitrari-

ly, but according to the general facts, pacifism may be separated into two main branches. There are the authoritarian or religious pacifists, not necessarily taking a Tolstoyan position against all use of physical force, but nevertheless believing that all group use of arms to accomplish any social purpose is invariably unethical and retrogressive. These have had scant difficulty in defining their own position even in the face of the Spanish crisis and its multitude of complications. While emotionally they have not been neutral, in effect they have been; and their solutions for the fascist attack in Spain have increasingly come down to the ephemeral hope of a negotiated peace or a political and economic compromise.

Far more difficult has been the intellectual position of the political pacifists, those who recognize that when governments are to be administered even on pacifist lines, there must be a legitimate exercise of police power, and efficiently armed police power at that, if the democratic rights of individuals and groups are to be protected against reckless bands of well-armed counter-revolutionaries whose scruples diminish as their subsidies from outside fascist sources swell. Pacifists are, to be sure, justified in their suspicion of "police power" as an alibi for every precipitate recourse to arms; they recall the sorry spectacle of American pacifism at the time of the Civil War, and how in the name of "police power" against rebellion it threw its energies behind that fratricide in the delusion that racial, social, and economic freedom for the Negro race would be an accompaniment of paper liberation. Yet it has not been easy to define the limits of police power in the Spanish instance, and a vast confusion has permeated the ranks of political pacifists the world around. H. Runham Brown, Secretary of the War Resisters' International, and one of the clearest minds of our generation, has asserted that police power is exceeded when it becomes necessary to destroy those whom you are seeking to restrain; but under the conditions of modern armaments, when the Franco forces—largely mercenary—attempt to batter their way into Madrid and are slain in this unprovoked attempt, on whose head is the destruction which follows? That a line exists somewhere is obvious, but it seems clear that, wherever the line may be drawn ideologically by pacifists or non-pacifists, with the training the Spanish Loyalists had received and the methods they had known they could have done substantially only what they did.

Pacifism, in contradistinction to the legalistic peace movement, does not seek defeat or even a pious neutrality, but rather the conquest of social offenders of all types. If it does not utilize military power, it still seeks to "overcome evil with good." This is basically a revolutionary concept. But pacifism has been suffering, neverthless, from its lack of alertness to certain new factors that have been injected into our present-day civilization. These factors are inherent in the development of modern scientific combat. In the first place, there has been a complete depersonalization of warfare, so that the old pacifist hope of bringing about a conversion of the foe through his responsiveness to fearless good-will—and no one who knows of the countless individual conquests in history of this nature could possibly scoff—are almost out of the picture. The foeman nowadays who under other circumstances might have responded to the kindling glance of good-will and the flaming word of fraternity, can hear nothing against the roar of his motor as he peers down on kindling homes and

flaming cities and drops his bombs impersonally on writhing ant-like humans whom he does not know but whom by scientific propaganda he has been persuaded to fear and hate.

In the second place, the mechanization of armaments has reduced the area of opportunity for non-coercive conquest, since the number of men required to devastate a substantial geographical territory has been reduced to a comparative handful. It is undeniably true that the Gandhi technique, or more effectively the Gandhi technique plus the socialist ideology of a Nehru, has taken cognizance of these social changes; but it is also true that occidental pacifism, while admiring from afar the values in the Gandhi technique, and also those examples which have come down from recent history quite apart from Gandhi's ideas and even prior to them, has done little in practice to apply such methods to a complex industrial or semi-industrial civilization.

Does the comparative inadequacy of world pacifism in the face of a crisis such as that in Spain, necessarily imply that armed might is certain to win; or that it is an absolute essential of the class struggle everywhere; or that those who lean upon it are any less traditional or any more immune from criticism? How can any observant person think so? In fact, the growing reliance upon armed might as the best defense against fascist reaction is objectively proving that many pacifist criticisms of such methodology are profoundly true.

Pacifists have insisted that warfare, and vast military machinery for armed national or class defense, are well-nigh impossible to control; that warfare, once begun, fixes its own objective and determines the ends of conflict, while even military preparedness tends to indoctrinate entire populations with a militarism which is professedly abhorred. What better example than the Soviet Union? No one could fairly say that the Red Army was not in some measure an institution for the promotion of working-class democracy and the education of youth; yet the utterances of fascist dictators were strangely echoed from the lips of Bukharin in 1935 when he called for a higher birth rate for the "defense of the fatherland." The editorial staff of "Soviet Russia Today" pridefully selected a photograph for publication in the current issue illustrating the latest game—"Spanish Events" —being played all over Russia by Soviet children, showing a girl of about four years holding a doll in one hand and a revolver in the other, and beside her a five-year-old boy with a gun over his right shoulder and a doll in his left hand. All this is in harmony with the teaching of military strategy through "play" to eight-year-olds. If the price of saving working-class rule in Spain is the poisoning of millions of young children with militaristic psychology, no one, at the very least, could suggest it should be lightly paid.

Pacifists have further declared that the very arguments which support defensive use of arms in Spain may thoughtlessly lead to a vindication of the same tactics in situations very diferent, as, for instance, armed insurrection in the United States, not necessarily now, but at some conceivably early juncture. They will of course feel confirmed in their views when they read the words of one socialist leader who says that "American socialists are as willing to risk their lives in the struggle for Socialism in Spain as they are in their own country." Or when another says: "If the Debs Brigade lets the American workers see their future in the mirror of Spain—then so much the better. Perhaps, then,

the American workers can avoid some of the errors of their Spanish brothers!" There is in truth a certain resemblance, apart from the psychology of the people, between the Spanish situation and that of Russia in 1917; but that there is any revolutionary similarity between Spain and the United States, or likely to be any for years to come, is the sheerest nonsense. But such excesses of judgment and indignation—coming not from superficial socialists but trusted and devoted comrades whose services to the movement are unquestionable—only justify one fundamental pacifist suspicion of "the glory road."

Another criticism often voiced by pacifists asserts that if undue emphasis is placed upon planned violence as the means of winning the revolutionary struggle, there will be inevitable disappointment at the end for those who believe that the triumph of Socialism will automatically mean an end to war. It is not to deny the general truth of this thesis to point out, all the same, that the hope must be severely shaken when the Soviet Union resorts to wholesale executions without trial, as well as suspicious trials in some cases to win "security" against Trotskyites dissatisfied with the Stalin regime; while on the other hand spokesmen for Trotsky frequently demand bloody revolution against the world's outstanding proletarian government in the name of justice and revenge. It is eternally true that violence begets violence and that, since a society impregnated with violence is far from the revolutionary ideal, violence in its consequences is ordinarily reactionary.

If a contrary traditional view persists in socialist ideology, to reassert itself at frequent periods of crisis, no student of sociology can be surprised. Interpreters of Marx who note the effect of generally unsuccessful violent revolutionary movements on Marx and Engels, and their decreasing interest in violence in later years, are often nonplussed and, like Sydney Hook, confess they can find no explanation. Almost universally, socialists who discuss the place of violence in the class struggle expose the identical gap in their thought above referred to in the case of pacifists. In short, they tend to ignore recent experience and scientific development altogether, and pathetically oversimplify the issue. They will offer you only a single choice—that between spineless defeatism or the upbuilding of revolutionary armies. Thus the traitor Alejandro Lerroux glibly declared, shortly after the political revolution of April, 1931, "Opposed to oppression, violence is a right; against liberty, violence is fratricide."

With these words of the subsequent pro-fascist manipulator, curiously enough many revolutionary socialists are in complete agreement. Thus one ardent advocate of planned violence feels that the abandonment of arms as a means of social contest "amounts merely to telling the workers that they should accept the triumph of reaction and their martyrdom without a struggle." Thus another defender of volunteer military aid to the Spanish government, warrantably aroused by a misrepresentation of the purpose of the Debs Column, replied by saying that "Debs never, never, said that the working-class should supinely submit to every act of terror perpetrated by the ruling class." The alternative, then, in this incredibly naive view, is either to give up the ghost in pious resignation, or to emulate, not in aim but in essential methods, the fascist technique of conquest. The tragic thing about this fallacious alternative is primarily its guarantee that, under most

crises likely to arise in modern industrialized nations, the working-class is doomed to defeat and that fascism is destined to triumph. The reason is found, again, in the depersonalization of war and the increasing mechanization of modern combat.

Realistic pacifists do not contend, as Marx seems to have implied, that in countries like England and the United States, where a superficial political democracy prevails, parliamentary methods alone might serve as a successful alternative to armed revolution. The elements in Germany among the Social-Democrats who made a fetish of legality were not the pacifists, but those who sturdily believed in security through the private uniformed armies organized against Hitlerism. In Austria, it was not the pacifists who were responsible for the dilly-dallying tactics employed toward Dollfuss, but those who had organized the *Schutzbund* and depended upon it alone for proletarian defense.

Rather, the intelligent pacifist's case against armed social revolution in the present era is based in no small measure upon the transformation that has come about in the ratio of power between organized governments and revolutionary movements. The mechanization of armament, the declining chances of a successful *coup d'etat,* and the lessening numbers of military strategists required to crush a rebellion must profoundly change our estimates of revolutionary tactics. The occasional exceptions, particularly in countries still primarily agrarian, do not affect the general trend. To most of the world at the present time, the ratio of Authority-power to Revolutionary-power has shifted so that Authority-power is developing by geometrical progression while Revolutionary-power is progressing at an arithmetical pace. The establishment of such instruments of the state as a Cheka or a Gestapo, plus the almost invariable possession by the government of superior arms and financial aid from outside, offers steadily decreasing opportunities for successful violent revolution. The Spanish situation, because fascists used their governmental posts to betray the Republic, presents a unique exception. It is unfortunate not to recognize this fact, to persist in mouthing ancient phrases of grandiose nobility; and indefensible to spend young blood desperately needed for the task of revolutionary construction, on methods which only defer revolutionary triumph.

It is highly instructive to note how appreciative of the sit-down strike and its implications are many of those who have been loud in their jeers at the Gandhi-Nehru methodology, in view of the positive historical development of the sit-down strike from its practice on a substantial scale by the non-violent strugglers of India. The *hartal* in India, organized on a general scale, possessed, it is true, only partial revolutionary implications, but revolutionary implications none the less. It is doubtless true that many a radical who sneers at "pacifism" would have heartily approved when, at Macon in 1935, between forty and fifty men and women sat on the railway tracks—an old Ghandi strategy —leading into one of the plants where they were striking and for hours effectively delayed the movement of a switching engine, preventing operation of the plant by scabs.

It is impossible here, of course, to outline the instances in history in which more profound objectives have been attained by non-military struggle. No more is it possible to discuss the strength and weakness of the general strike, or other methods; though it may be worth while to note that the very

mechanization which helps Authority break armed revolt weakens it before a sound functional use (no really "general" strike is ever possible or needed) of strategic labor power. But such methods can never, of course, supplant the use of firm police power to check counter-revolution when a radical government is placed in power. It is of great importance, however, that socialists do not thrust pacifism aside for what it is not, losing the value out of what it is; that the socialist movement look behind old slogans and shibboleths to the new conditions which have arisen in our present-day world; that revolutionaries should not dwell fatuously upon the glorious courage displayed in struggles lost because the tactics used were wrong.

There was an old woman who cried out at every educational innovation, "You can't tell me anything about raising children. Haven't I buried eight?" Any technique of revolutionary conquest which may hold the slightest promise, should not be dismissed like this, but should be weighed, evaluated, and used for all the worth it holds in the revolutionary struggle.

The British Labour Movement Today

G. D. H. Cole

THE Labour Party in Great Britain is facing something in the nature of a crisis. Its leaders would for the most part deny this; for according to them there is nothing seriously amiss. It is true that both last year's General Election and the 1936 Municipal Elections were very seriously disappointing; and recent by-elections do not show that the party is making any considerable progress, despite the manifest fact that the Government has gone back on its election pledges and is now busy betraying the cause of European democracy by its attitude to the Spanish Civil War. The Labour leaders are disappointed; but they blame their critics and not themselves for the way things are going. Their misguided critics in and out of the party—these, and the inherent difficulties of the situation—are in their expressed view the causes of Labour's failure to regain more of the ground lost in 1931.

The active members of the party, or at any rate a great many of them, do not share this view of the trouble. Many of the delegates who attended the Edinburgh Conference of the party in October came away disgusted—there is no other word. They felt that they had been steam-rolled by the platform, and that the platform's policy was one of sheer evasion of the essential issues. Over Spain, on which feeling in the movement runs high, the Conference first accepted, by means of the trade union block vote, a resolution endorsing the policy of non-intervention. Then, after the speeches of the Spanish delegates had made those present realize that non-intervention meant in fact leaving the Spanish people defenseless against General Franco's plentiful supplies of German and Italian arms, the feeling in the Conference so mounted that the earlier resolution had to be set aside, and Messrs. Attlee and Greenwood were sent to London to see Mr. Chamberlain, in order to tell him—none quite knew what; for even at this latter

stage there was no plain declaration in favor of helping the Spanish people. The Spanish business at the Conference was an appalling muddle, out of which the British Government was able to make abundant capital in favor of its "non-interventionist" policy. Nor has the situation improved since. Local Labour Parties have done much, but the Labour Party nationally has done next to nothing, to help the Spanish cause.

The handling of the issues of re-armament and foreign policy at Edinburgh was no less unsatisfactory. It was a mistake of the first order to allow the principal issue at the Conference to appear to be whether the Labour Party should support or oppose re-armament. For that is not really the vital issue—which is, what the armaments are for. The right line for the Labour Party to take was to proclaim plainly that it stood for a policy of pooled security, based on close collaboration with France, the Soviet Union, and the rest of the forces in Europe that stand for peace and democracy, and that it would have nothing to do with re-armament except in furtherance of that policy plainly proclaimed.

But here again all was evasion. The trade union leaders wanted to support the official re-armament policy practically without conditions. The parliamentary leaders, more conscious of the state of feeling in the ranks of the party, were mostly not prepared to give the Government a blank cheque. They wanted conditions, but they were not sure either what conditions they wanted, or what to do if conditions were refused.

The result was a resolution of quite remarkable ambiguity which, in the debate, everyone in turn interpreted in a different way. The upshot of this was that the capitalist press was able, with plenty of plausibility, to interpret the Labour Party as having gone on record in favor of re-armament, whereas the party's leader, Mr. Attlee, was able to affirm with perfect sincerity that the resolution had decided nothing, and that it was left to the party in Parliament to determine its attitude in the light of subsequent events.

There are times when hedging does not matter, or is even positively to the good. But, in the present critical position of world affairs, to hedge is to surrender to the Government the initiative and the control of events. Especially was this the case in view of the fact that the Trade Union Congress, meeting a month before the Labour Party, had to all intents and purposes given the Government *carte blanche* to re-arm as much as it chose. The followers of the party in the country were bewildered by the sheer failure of leadership. They were the more dismayed because the time spent over debating Spain and re-armament caused the resolutions dealing with the re-formulation of the labor program to be shoved into the background, and for the most part postponed for another year.

Two other issues divided the Edinburgh Conference—the application of the Communist Party for affiliation, and the Executive's determination to "discipline" the Labor League of Youth. Despite the support of the Mineworkers' Federation, it was evident before the Conference began that the communist affiliation would be rejected. The Local Labour Parties were divided on this issue; and most of the trade unions, as well as the Party Executive, were hostile. Therefore, after a most perfunctory debate — prematurely closured on the pretext of sparing time to hear the Spanish delegates—the application was turned down. The logical sequel was the dissolution of the existing Execu-

tive of the Labour League of Youth, which is suspected of being under communist influence. The League is now to be reconstructed as a tame and safe appendage of the party headquarters, forbidden to speak its mind upon controversial issues, and expected to do the donkey work of the party without asking the reason why.

The immediate effect of the Edinburgh manoueverings was to convert a not very influential movement for the reform of the Labour Party Machine, hitherto confined to a minority of Local Labour Parties, chiefly in the Home Counties near London, into a formidable national revolt. A conference of local delegates, presided over by Sir Stafford Cripps, was attended by an altogether unexpected number of persons, and proposals for increasing the voting power and representation on the Executive of the local parties, as distinct from the affiliated trade unions, received general support from those present. Much feeling was expressed against the domination of the conference by the trade union block vote, which was cast, on this occasion, mainly on the reactionary side. Projects were discussed for holding next autumn a national representative gathering of local party delegates, without the delegates of the trade unions, with a view to promoting an amendment of the party constitution. The local parties, and not the trade union leaders, it was urged, do the day-to-day work of the party, and they have the right to an effective say in its policy. The delegates disclosed that they would not submit any longer to trade union dictation—especially if it came, as they alleged it did, not from the trade union rank and file, but from a handful of securely entrenched trade union leaders.

The Edinburgh Conference thus ended in an atmosphere of disillusion and dissension. On more than one central question, this dissension arises out of a real cleavage of opinion, not between leaders and rank and file, but in the movement itself. On international matters, for example, one considerable minority follows George Lansbury in his absolute repudiation of war, and adheres to a policy of complete pacifism even in face of the fascist aggression in Spain and of the threat of further fascist attacks. A second group, less clearly defined, argues that any war fought by Great Britain under capitalism will be in effect an imperialist war, and that the duty of the workers is to unite in opposition to imperialist governments in order to achieve Socialism, and to remain in implacable hostility to all rearmament under capitalist auspices. This view seems to find its chief expression through the Socialist League and, outside the Labour Party, through Mr. Maxton's following in the I.L.P. A third section argues that an incoming Labour Government, in view of the fascist menace in Europe, would need heavy armaments, and cannot logically refuse them to a capitalist government whose mantle it is proposing to inherit. Yet a fourth argues in favor of keeping out of European entanglements, and concentrating on questions of internal policy with a view of improving the British standard of life. Finally, there is the section—to which I belong—which holds that, in face of the fascist menace in Europe, the essential task is to turn out the present reactionary government and replace it by a government which will come down decisively on the side of pooled security and collaboration with the democratic forces in Europe against fascist aggression.

The ambiguous Edinburgh resolution on re-armament plainly reflects these differences of view. It is, however, out

of the question for a party which cannot make up its mind about the most vital question of the day to offer itself to the electorate as a potential alternative government. It is indeed highly desirable to avoid any sort of split in the labor ranks; for such a split might weaken labor disastrously in the fight against fascism and reaction. But it is no less fatal to give the impression of indecision and unreadiness to assume the task of government; for voters will not vote for a party which does not appear to know its own mind, and to a substantial extent party workers, on whom the progress of democratic movements essentially depends, will not work for such a party with all their strength and enthusiasm.

My own view is clear; and perhaps I had better set it out at this point in order that those who agree or disagree with it may be able to interpret my comments in the light of my personal attitude. I believe that the present state of affairs in Europe is so critical, and points so plainly to the imminence of further wars of fascist aggression, that for the time being international policy ought to take precedence of everything else. The great objective of the moment should be the creation of a world-wide anti-fascist Democratic Front of peace-loving nations strong enough and united enough in a plan of pooled security to have a good prospect of preventing war. To the achievement of such a Democratic Front I would not, of course, sacrifice my socialist convictions. Why should I? But I would postpone working directly for the immediate establishment of Socialism—well knowing both that there is no real question in Great Britain of immediate Socialism and that, if world war comes and Great Britain has not been brought over to the democratic side, all prospects of getting Socialism are likely to be swept away, at any rate for a long time to come.

With a view to this international policy, I want to bring about the fall of the present British Government at the earliest possible moment. I want that, because I feel that it is out of the question to expect a government based definitely on the "Right" to side with the "Left" in the present international struggle, and because I am convinced that if such a government has to choose finally between fascism and Socialism, it will choose fascism as a means of preserving the capitalist system. It follows that to help the present British Government to re-arm is to run a serious risk of supplying arms which will be used at the critical moment against the workers' cause and against democracy. Accordingly, I should refuse all collaboration with the present rulers of Great Britain, and subordinate all other matters of immediate policy to the attempt to compass the Government's fall.

But how is this to be done? The National Government has a very large parliamentary majority; and in the ordinary course no General Election will be held for three or four years. Moreover, even if an election were held, as matters stand to-day, the Government would come back with a clear majority. The Labour Party is making but small electoral progress, if any at all; and as present indications show there is no likelihood of a clear labor majority being even distantly in sight.

This situation exists, not because the government is popular, but largely because there does not seem to be any alternative to it. The labor leadership does not command confidence; and in any case it would take a long time to convert enough of the areas in which trade unionism is weak to a labor point of view to make even a clear labor ma-

jority possible. Accordingly, the only practicable alternative to the present coalition of the Right is a coalition of the Left, including the Labour Party, but reinforcing it with all other elements that in the present age of conflict belong broadly to the democratic side.

For the achievement of such a "People's Front," unity among the working-class groups is the first essential. That is my primary reason for deeply regretting the Labour Party's refusal to accept the affiliation of the Communist Party. In Great Britain the Communist Party is still too small for a nominally equal coalition of the two parties in a "United Front" of the working class to have much reality or possibility of success. Affiliation of the smaller to the larger body, of course on terms involving the acceptance of its rules and policy, is therefore the best solution. The communists said they were prepared for this; I think they should have been taken at their word, and admitted to the Labour Party on the same terms as the Socialist League or any other affiliated body.

This "United Front," to which the I.L.P. would of course have been admitted too, if it had been willing to come in, would have greatly strengthened working-class propaganda; and it would also have opened the way to a wider "People's Front," including both large numbers of liberals and a few "Left Conservatives," and a much larger number of unattached supporters of a democratic policy—such as the active workers in the League of Nations Union, the largely "Free Church" Council of Action, the Next Five Years' Group, and a number of youth and other organizations at present working outside the party machines. This "People's Front" would have to be based on a quite short, simple program, confined entirely to questions of immediate practical policy. Its first point would be insistence on a democratic security pact, open to all countries ready to accept its obligations, and it would promise, not preservation of the status quo, but redress of legitimate national grievances to all countries that accepted this pact. The rest of the program would consist entirely of immediate democratic measures designed to expand employment, to improve the treatment of the unemployed (including the abolition of the hated "Household Means Test"), to raise the standards of living and nutrition, to extend civil liberty and suppress all forms of incitement to violence, and, last but not least, to establish State control, and where needful public ownership and operation, of the arms industries, of all public utility services, and of all industries vital to the improvement of the standard of life.

This, as I see it, is the basic program for a British People's Front. I believe that, given the right leadership and propaganda, an immense popular movement could be speedily built up behind such a program—perhaps even a crusade powerful enough to sweep the present government out of office within a year, and put a "Left" Government in its place. But such a consummation is plainly impossible without the cooperation of the Labour Party, which must play the leading part in such a People's Front; and that cooperation is at present refused.

At Edinburgh, the question of a People's Front did not come up—only the question of the communist affiliation. Now, it is perfectly plain that there exists inside the Labour Party—and not only among trade union and political leaders—a very large amount of strong anti-communist feeling. Nor is this surprising. For years past, nationally and locally, the active workers in the Labour

Party have been vilified by the communists as "social traitors." Even though, for a year or more, since the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations, the communists have been on their best behavior, it takes more than a year to wipe out such memories. Moreover, the local as well as the national labor leaders have been faced, for years past, by a series of rank and file movements, unofficial strikes and hunger-marchers and demonstrations, by means of which the Communist Party has sought to stir up unrest and to make things awkward for the more slow-moving trade union officials and municipal councillors and Labour M.P.'s.

From this communist standpoint, a militant policy in home affairs is indispensable for rousing the workers to a sense of the class-struggle. From the standpoint of the trade union officials, it is constantly landing them and their members in hot water through breaches of agreements with employers' associations, or by prejudicing their chances of getting moderate concessions from the local Town Council, or by scaring off timid voters from the labor cause. For these reasons, there is strong opposition to giving official recognition within the party to the communists, who might then use it to pursue their irritation tactics more effectively from within. Nor is this objection without substance. There would be a good deal in it, if its importance were not outweighed by the necessity of securing working-class unity in face of the international danger.

At Edinburgh, about half the Local Labour Parties represented at the conference (many were not represented because they could not afford the cost) voted for the communist affiliation. The other half, and most of the trade unions except the miners, voted against. Here, then, there is a real and profound cleavage of opinion, though, owing to the trade union block vote, the majority against affiliation appeared much larger than it really was.

As to the wider People's Front, a certain group of socialists contends that nothing should be done about it until working-class unity has been achieved. But the experience of Edinburgh shows that working-class unity will not be achieved save under the impulsion of a larger idea. I am convinced that the only policy which offers hope of early success is to begin at once upon the People's Front, on a basis wide enough to bring in communists at the one extreme and "Left Conservatives" and unattached progressives at the other, by individual adhesion or by collaboration between local groups which are ready to come together. In this way, an unofficial People's Front, created locally in one area after another, in a form suitable to the conditions of each area, can prepare the way for a National People's Front, and at the same time create inside the working-class movement the momentum necessary for the achievement of unity. The present need is for a propagandist crusade, designed to create the idea of a "People's Front" in men's minds. Only when that has been done will it be possible to bring the formal organization together.

Meanwhile, the position is bound to be deeply unsatisfactory. Quite apart from the strong section of opinion which is ready to support the government in re-arming, under the impression that British armaments are likeliest to be directed against the Fascist Powers, there is a strong undercurrent of definite pacifism in the working-class and democratic movements. The vocal section of this body of opinion consists of out-and-out pacifists committed to the complete renunciation of war in all its forms. This

group is, I think, relatively small, but growing. It has Lansbury, the biggest figure in the Labour Movement, to lead it; the Rev. "Dick" Sheppard is a very effective propagandist; and men such as Bertrand Russell, though his support is not unqualified, give it a high intellectual standing.

But what matters more is that behind the pure pacifists is a much larger body of opinion that is practically pacifist, because it views the prospect of modern war with so much fear and horror as to be prepared to give up almost anything rather than embark upon it. This type of pacifism often comes near the "isolationism" of Lord Beaverbrook and his imperialist friends. But, reluctant to find itself in such company, it tends to range itself either with Lansbury and Sheppard or alternatively with the very different point of view represented by the I.L.P. and, with some modification, by the Socialist League.

These bodies contend, first, that any war waged by capitalist Britain is bound to turn into an imperialist war, which will result, whichever side wins, in working-class defeat. They hold that the one thing needful is to strengthen the working-class movement and to keep it uncontaminated by non-socialist allies. The I.L.P., at any rate, rejects both the People's Front in Great Britain and the attempt to build a pooled-security system based on the democratic and peace-loving Powers. It prefers to go on with its socialist propaganda, undeterred even if fascism conquers all Europe and the fabric of civilization collapses under its feet. The attitude of the Socialist League on these issues is not so clear; but of late it has seemed to come nearer to the I.L.P. point of view. Sir Stafford Cripps, however, who is no longer its chairman, though still associated with it, has strongly advocated pooled security, while appearing to urge that it can be promoted only under a socialist government.

The confrontation of these various opinions inevitably leaves the British working-class movement in a terrible state of muddle. For there seems to be no leader capable of rallying the majority which, as I believe, stands for the policy of pooled security as far as it stands for anything at all. The two most magnetic leaders are Lansbury and Cripps—one among the pure pacifists and the other among the anti-imperialist section of the Left. Among the official labor leaders, Morrison and Attlee are the best; but they both lack personal magnetism, and find themselves hampered by the necessity of expressing in their propaganda the hesitations and ambiguities of the official policy. Bevin, the ablest of the trade union leaders, stands at present with Citrine on the extreme Right, among the almost unqualified supporters of government rearmament. But he is not by instinct or fundamental conviction nearly so far to the Right as he has seemed of late. He might become one of the leaders of a popular crusade, if he could overcome his dislike of communists and intellectuals. Pollitt is the communists' best leader; but his party is still too isolated from the general mass of organized labor for him to serve as a rallying point for more than a minority section of opinion. New leadership, or at least a new crusade which will act powerfully enough on some of the existing leaders to lift them out of their ruts of thought, is urgently required. Till that has been created, or the whole situation changed by some new shattering event, British labor seems likely to remain in its state of confusion, and the reactionary National Government of the Right to stay in power, doing its worst toward wrecking the democratic cause.

People's Front Prepares War

Gus Tyler

FOR the time being international policy ought to take precedence of everything else," says G. D. H. Cole in his formulation of a policy for British labor.

What Cole says of Britain applies to the entire capitalist world. The war question is to-day, as in 1914, the watershed of socialist thought.

It was *the* question at the recent Edinburgh Conference of the British Labor Party. The resolution adopted by the conference was a pro-arms and pro-war resolution. The opponents of the resolution claim that it is ambiguous and evasive. They are really too kind to the Labour Party leaders. The resolution is *not* really ambiguous: it is pro-war!

Here is the resolution:

"In view of the threatening attitude of Dictatorships which are increasing their armaments at an unprecedented rate, flouting International Law, and refusing to cooperate in the work of organizing peace, this conference declares that the armed strength of the countries loyal to the League of Nations must be conditioned by the armed strength of the potential aggressors.

"The conference, therefore, reaffirms the policy of the Labour Party to maintain such defense forces as are consistent with our country's responsibility as a member of the League of Nations, the preservation of the people's rights and liberties, the continuance of democratic institutions, and the observance of International Law.

"Realizing the relationship between foreign policy and armaments, and having a regard to the deplorable record of the Government, the Labour Party declines to accept responsibility for a purely competitive armament policy. It reserves full liberty to criticize the re-armament program of the present Government, and declares the continuance of vested interests in the private manufacture of arms to be a grave contributory danger to the Peace of the World."

If this is not a pro-armament resolution, then Baldwin is a pacifist. It is good to see that the Labour Party still "reserves full liberty to criticize." Perhaps at the next conference it will pass a resolution depriving itself of this "liberty" too.

The Labour Party is today a well oiled part of Baldwin's war machine. Just so soon as the Government, operating in accordance with its "responsibility as a Member of the League of Nations," declares war, the Labour Party will be converted into one huge recruiting station.

No wonder that "many delegates who attended the Edinburgh Conference of the party in October came away disgusted," as G. D. H. Cole points out.

Marxists, who know that a war fought by British capitalism is a war for the suppression of peoples in the greatest empire in the world, have a right to be disgusted.

Marxists, who know that a larger army will be used not only for foreign but also for domestic purposes to establish a dictatorship at home, have a right to be disgusted.

Marxists, who know that the cost of the huge battleships (intended to strangle colonials) and of giant guns (which will at the proper moment be turned against the British workers) must be carried by the British masses, have a right to be disgusted.

But frankly, G. D. H. Cole has *no*

right to be disgusted. Because what the British labor leaders are doing in their usually clumsy way, Cole proposes to do in a much more convincing and facile way. And Marxists, viewing his proposals, once more "have a right to be etc. . . ."

Let us consider his proposals:

Cole is not opposed to arming British capitalism. He is not opposed to having British capitalism go to war. In fact, he is quite enthusiastic about both. But—Cole insists—when Britain goes to war, it must do so as the ally of France and the Soviet Union and not as somebody else's ally.

Cole really need not grow so indignant. His view is not so vastly different from that of the British Labour Party or even of the Government.

Great Britain, in the present international crisis, just as in the years from 1905 to 1914, vacillated continually between the two great military camps of Europe. Britain has never surrendered the policy of maintaining a balance of power in Europe. During the last half dozen years, British policy—based upon the balance of power idea—has meant an alternating policy of spraying hot and cold upon its neighbors in Europe.

One section of British capitalism is undoubtedly strongly pro-German; another section of British capitalism is just as strongly anti-German. And the Government, primarily interested in maintaining the British Empire, has been able to please both divergent capitalist elements at home and to win a strategic place in foreign affairs by its hypocritical, but nevertheless effective, balancing of the international scales.

Should a new war break, it is difficult to foretell just on what side Britain will line up. Most likely, should Germany and the Soviet Union go to war, Britain may stand aside. Least likely, in the above event, is an open declaration of war by Britain against the Soviet Union. And somewhat likely is an alliance between France and Britain.

But the alliances, just as diplomacy itself, will be a function of imperialist intrigue. Britain's going to war—under capitalism—will be a "continuation of its politics;" i.e., imperialist politics, "conducted by forcible means." The war will be an imperialist war!

Cole advances his "policy of pooled security, based on close collaboration with France, the Soviet Union, and the rest of the forces in Europe that stand for peace and security," not as a war policy but as a *peace policy*. He thinks it will maintain peace!

Radek once termed Wilson's dream of a capitalist world living in peace "the last Utopia of the bourgeoisie, a Utopia which is the last great idea of the capitalist world."

A Utopia, indeed, in 1919! But to believe that a new alliance of capitalist nations can, through the threat of their collective power, maintain peace in Europe to-day is no longer a Utopia, but an hallucination!

War is inevitable under capitalism. The interbellum periods are just moments of war preparation. These preparations are both military and psychologic. Treaties—supported by the mass of the nation—always written "for peace," of course, are *the* most influential means of war preparation.

Wars are not made the day before war. Wars are made months and years before the official outbreak; and they are prepared by creating the impression in the minds of the masses that "our" country is innocent, that "our" country wants peace, that "our" country wanted "pooled security;" and that the "other" country is guilty, is warlike, is against pooled security. War-mindedness is

groomed by just such peace slogans as those advanced by G. D. H. Cole.

Slogans such as Cole's create the impression that the cause of the strife lies in the belligerency of one set of nations as opposed to the goodness of another set. In fact, that must really be what he believes. In reality, however, wars arise from the imperialist competition of *all* the great capitalist powers. And the workers, therefore, see no moral justice on the side of any capitalist power at war.

Britain may sign a million agreements; with one side or both sides. Britain will *only* go to war when its empire is in danger. And when the British masses go to war under capitalism, they go to war to save the empire.

"To save the Empire" means to maintain that system of international slavery which the British ruling class has imposed upon millions of oppressed natives in five continents, without distinction as to whether their skin be white, yellow, black or brown. To go to war under British capitalism means to go to war for slavery!

To support a war of British capitalism, moreover, means the continued enslavement not only of millions of British subjects over seas but also of millions right at home.

Cole is quite frank: "I would postpone working directly for the immediate establishment of Socialism," he says. But, he hastens to assure us, "I would not, of course, sacrifice my socialist convictions."

"Why should I?" he asks himself. And the answer is: "Because you will have to sacrifice your socialist convictions!"

The class struggle is not a manufactured product. Only doltish police minds think that the class war is created by wicked agitators. The class struggle is not like a garment, cut according to pattern and designed according to order.

The class struggle rages today on all fronts: on the colonial front, at home; on the farms, in the shops.

An appeal to the colors, by a capitalist government, may momentarily rally the nation to a unified campaign; but soon this artificial stimulus of chauvinist agitation must wear off. And the class struggle breaks out anew.

Wherever it breaks out, abroad or at home, on the land or in the town, it cripples the war machine. *The unity of the nation* is the deadly foe of *the class struggle.* No man has ever discovered a policy that can unite the two. Those who support the unity of the nation must impose a halt upon the class struggle. And those who would continue the struggle must reject the idea of a nation united in war.

These are only *words* of warning today, what some like to call oft-repeated phrases. But to-morrow these words are acts, acts setting one in the camp of the workers or in the camp of the chauvinists. What does the supporter of war do when strikes break out in the ammunition factories, on the railroads, on the docks? To support the strike means to disrupt the war! The only alternative is to do what the Chinese communists did when they subordinated the class struggle to *national unity:* break the strikes! And what does the "Democratic Front" do when Ireland revolts again, or when Britain's "life-line" is cut by rebellions in Egypt, or Palestine, or Arabia, or India?

One must choose: either class struggle or national unity! On paper Cole can hold both; but not in practice!

In one respect Cole's program is different from that of the British Labour

Party's. Cole will not vote for armaments, unless he can get the government to change its foreign policy. In fact, he believes that since the Government will not change its policy, it must be replaced by a People's Front Government, which People's Front shall conduct a vigorous anti-fascist foreign policy!

British socialists need not turn to theory to discover the nature of a Popular Front Government's imperial policy. For if we are not taken in by names or cuss words, the MacDonald Government was really a popular front; i.e., a government of liberals and laborites, with a progressive orientation confined to reforms within capitalism.

Was not MacDonald, spokesman for the British Labour Party, guilty of sending bombing expeditions to India to mutilate thousands of natives? And did the Labour Party not tolerate this crime? Did not Labour men go to Ireland, at the time of the Easter Rebellion, to "save the Empire?"

A Popular Front Government, which has not set itself the revolutionary task of smashing the capitalist state and the empire (as of necessity it will not), can be just as effective an administrator of the affairs of the imperialist bourgeoisie as the National Government.

Has the French Popular Front liberated Syria? Has it even lessened the tyranny of French imperialism in that colony?

Does not the French Popular Front Government have its industrial mobilization plans, to crush labor under foot in the event of a war?

Has not the French Popular Front Government passed its "loyalty oath," compelling teachers to swear and teach fealty to the nation, to spread patriotism and love of country, to halt all classroom criticism of the government's arming and war plans?

Did all those governments in Europe in 1914 - 18, *which included labor men and socialists,* (France, Germany, Belgium and Great Britain) make the wars more worthy of support?

Let's be clear: a Popular Front Government is a Capitalist Government. It is a particular kind of capitalist government, but it is capitalist nevertheless.

When we say it is a capitalist government, we mean that its army, its bureaucracy, its permanent officialdom, are capitalist minded, and that the state institutions they control will move only along capitalist-imperialist lines. We mean, further, that the state will carry out and pass no laws which infringe upon capitalist property rights.

A Popular Front Government at war, even more than at peace, can tolerate no strikes or mass actions which will disrupt the stability of the state. And just as in France to-day, revolutionary movements of the Left are treated harshly (and more harshly as they are the more powerful) on the grounds that "left" extremists open the door for fascists at home, so we may expect that the same government will quickly bring the club to bear upon the heads of all those "left" extremists who by their actions disrupt the war machine, on the ground that they are thereby opening the doors to the fascist abroad. Just as Dollfuss continually hemmed in the actions of the Austrian masses in order to save Austria from a Nazi dictatorship, so, too, does a Popular Front Government curb (and in a war crisis, halt) the actions of the working class.

The intentions of a Popular Front Government at war are different from that of a Conservative Government. The results are the same!

Nor are things improved by the nature of Comrade Cole's Popular Front program. His first demand is not bad,

but silly! "A democratic security pact, open to all countries ready to accept its obligations, and it would promise not preservation of the status quo, but redress of legitimate national grievances to all countries that accepted this pact."

This is an omnibus resolution, without possibility of clear interpretation or eventual realization. What is a "democratic" pact? Is it one that excludes Germany, Italy, Poland, Hungary, and Japan? What are "legitimate" national grievances? And what are illegitimate? And what national grievances would have to be redressed if the pact were to exclude just those countries which claim to have "legitimate" grievances, such as Germany?

The happiest interpretation we can give to this pact of the status quo powers to redress grievances is that it will consider the plight of minor and suppressed nationalities under the domination of the present democratic imperialist powers. But if Cole thinks that one can redress legitimate grievances while imperialism holds sway, then he is a victim of what the Russians call "Manilovism," that sentimental character who dreams such lovely things which will never happen because he can never make them happen in his state of surrealistic meditation.

Things are not much better in Cole's domestic program. What kind of capitalism is he talking about in which there is, if needful, public ownership and operation of the "arms industries, of all public utilities, of all industries vital to the improvement of the standard of life."

These things can be accomplished *only* when the rule of capitalism is ended. No People's Front can ever do these things. The French Popular Front certainly has not. It has not been able to remove any fascist officers from the army, any reactionaries from the police, any of the obstacles to progressive administration in the person of die-hard bureaucrats. What makes Cole think that a British Popular Front can do better?

Collette Audrey, in her article in *Controversy,* neatly summarizes the *necessary* limitations of a Popular Front Government:

> "One can not introduce reforms into the apparatus of the bourgeois state; one should seize upon it and break it.
>
> "A left republican government which comprises authentically bourgeois elements and which has been brought to power on the basis of a democratic program which does not in any way attack the right of property, the existing regime, or the constitution—such a government is necessarily reduced to impotence."

And if G. D. H. Cole had any doubts about the impotence of his British Popular Front when he conceived it in the abstract, he should no longer have had any illusions when he saw it operating in the concrete.

Here is a report of that meeting appearing in the British *Controversy:*

Said William Acland (Liberal M.P.): "There is no time today for the battle of the workers against the bosses" (loud applause—no class war on the industrial front). Then came D. R. Davies, speaking "for Labor." He was the perfect little gentleman. He apparently agreed that there is no time today for the battle of workers against bosses for, said he, "the urgency of present-day issues . . . demands magnanimity." Since one of these "urgent issues" (according to Mr. Davies himself) is underfeeding, we await with interest Mr. Davies' explanation as to how "magnanimity" on the part of the workers will bring them more food—without either forcing higher wages from the employers or overthrowing them altogether and instituting Socialism. But Mr. Davies compen-

sated for this omission by a magnificent sentence rivalling Gladstone's best efforts at impressive nonsense—"There is no need for Parties to drop their principles, but they must subordinate their differences." Anyone who can concretize that empty profundity into a practical program should at once offer his services as a propagandist to the People's Front committee.

John Strachey, communist, and Robert Boothby, Tory, both stressed the need for unity in order to fight "the Fascist Powers of the world" (Strachey) or "Germany" (Boothby). And Boothby was able to say that he agreed with all that "his friend, Mr. Strachey" had said. How long ago it seems since the "Daily Worker's" strident repetition that the National Government is a Fascist Government—and how much longer since the C.P. said—and meant—"Workers of the world, unite!" The C.P. still says these words, but now they mean "Workers of the (capitalist—but-yet-wholly-fascist) world, unite (with and behind your capitalist class)."

And then came G. D. H. Cole, who committed the indecency of saying, "The first task of a People's Front pledged to support democracy at home and abroad is to turn out the National Government." But then ended the harmony of the meeting. Robert Boothby rose from his seat on the platform and protested, afterwards leaving the hall. He told reporters that Mr. Cole "had delivered a smashing blow at the People's Front" and that he "dissociated himself entirely from the movement."

So we see that even Cole is a bit too "sectarian" for a British Popular Front.

Honeymoon

David P. Berenberg

THE triumphant re-election of President Roosevelt seemed to solve for the moment the question of progress or reaction. At least the Liberty League, Wall Street and Hearst were not to be in the saddle. The New Deal would go on, such as it was. There would be time for the consolidation of gains. Perhaps there would be more progress in the second term. The Social Security program would be tested out by its friends instead of by its enemies. There might be additional social security legislation. The Child Labor amendment would be pushed by the administration, instead of being privately retarded, as it was by both Coolidge and Hoover. Perhaps even the power of the Supreme Court, which had done valiant work for the financial barons by its invalidation of the NRA, the AAA and the minimum wage laws of the states, might be challenged. There seemed to be good reason for the "liberals" and the "progressives" to rejoice at the election of their champion. And if a few radicals glumly refused to join in the song of praise, that was their misfortune.

The days immediately after the November landslide were days of a new honeymoon. People talked of the unprecedented proportions of the victory and compared it with that of Monroe, the last President chosen by so overwhelming a margin. Talk of Monroe stimulated the memory of the "Era of Good Feeling." A new such era was to be inaugurated. The Wall Street princes, seeing that they were indeed in a mi-

nority, hastened now to say that Roosevelt was after all a good American, and that they had not meant literally all that they had said about him in the heat of the campaign. Hearst allowed some of his editors to compare Roosevelt to Jackson, and to say that if that was the sort of thing the people wanted then that was the sort of thing the people deserved to get. In the minds of some that denoted a gracious surrender on Hearst's part. The impression of surrender was heightened by the appointment of John Boettiger, the president's son-in-law, as editor of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Naturally the "people" also thought that an era of good feeling would now be initiated. If Wall Street capitulated, and if Hearst was muffling his fire, what was there now to fear? When the National Association of Manufacturers announced that industry must be prepared to accept some inevitable changes in employer and employee relations it certainly seemed that the battle was nearly over.

There was, therefore, more than chagrin among the WPA workers when the post-election onslaught on WPA rolls was launched. About twenty percent of the WPA workers were dropped from the rolls. The WPA administration began to talk about additional curtailment, and about a means test, a searching examination into the claims of each WPA worker to help. This, of course, was coupled with talk about the necessity of curtailing government expenses. It was hinted that, now that private industry was on the upswing, as a result, of course, of the pump-priming efforts of the administration, more and more workers should be absorbed in regular private occupations.

Nothing was said by the administration about the obvious fact that, if workers were turned loose by WPA at precisely the moment when they might be absorbed by private industry, then private industry could force them to accept the starvation wages which it hoped to impose on them. But the workers were not fooled. They saw the direction in which the curtailment was tending. They knew, besides, that there were still from eight to ten millions of workers that private industry was not ready to employ. They were not deceived by the spectacular wage increases announced by some of the firmer and larger industrial corporations. They knew that in most shops wages were low. They understood that, if the market were suddenly filled with men ready to take any job at any price, there would be no restoration of wage rates to the pre-depression level.

That is, under the leadership of the Workers' Alliance, the WPA workers demonstrated against dismissals and against the curtailment of projects. To no avail. The amount appropriated for relief was $750,000,000, where $1,040,000,000 should have been set aside.

Labor Troubles

In his inaugural address the president out-did himself. He has always been a master of suggesting everything and saying as little as he thinks he can under the circumstances. In this address he read the country a beautiful sermon about the great advances that had been made, chiefly under his auspices, in the war on poverty. He suggested that the war was not over, that thirty millions of Americans still lived too near the subsistence level to have any of the advantages that civilization has to offer. He did not outline any definite measures by which they could attain the highly desirable things they have not. He left it to the imagination and credulity of his audience to assume that in the next

four years they, with the other suppressed groups, would come into their own.

The first major test of President Roosevelt's labor policies came with the Seamen's strike. Assistant Secretary of Labor McGrady scurried here and there in an effort to bring the men and the shipping companies together. Nothing happened. In the end the men, entirely in consequence of their own strategy and perseverance, achieved a settlement that was substantially a victory. It was as in pre-New Deal days. The best that can be said for the administration—and in a sense, it is a good deal—is that it threw no monkey wrenches.

The Automobile Workers' Strike

The strike of the automobile workers was a different matter. In this case John L. Lewis was involved. Lewis had been the chief instrument in organizing labor's vote for Roosevelt. The president knew that Lewis was engaged in a vital battle on two fronts—to re-vitalize the labor movement, and to re-organize labor on an effective basis. The Automobile Workers strike was a challenge to the administration; a demand that it make good on its promises, expressed and implied. It was such a challenge even before Lewis abruptly demanded that the president do something about the situation.

The strike called forth from the reactionary forces the whole vocabulary of vituperation to which we have become accustomed. Lewis, asserted the New York "Herald Tribune," was acting as dictator. He had the country by the throat. He was bullying the president. He was setting up one class against another. (sic!) The sit-down strike was a threat to the very existence of property rights. The president had only himself to thank for the present situation: had he not encouraged Lewis to do precisely what he was doing? The reactionaries suddenly found that there was virtue in the old fashioned craft unionism of the A. F. of L. At least Green did not use sit-down methods, nor did he bully the president.

It was a dilemma from which the President could not very well escape. He rapped Lewis gently on the wrist, but he also put pressure on Secretary of Labor Perkins, and on Governor Frank Murphy of Michigan, to bring about a settlement.

The settlement that was achieved settles nothing. It leaves the issue of organization open. The CIO may, in the next six months, succeed in organizing the automobile workers. On the other hand, six months is a long time in which to undermine the Automobile Workers Union by a clever use of increased wages, by an attitude of amused benevolence, by redoubled efforts to create company unions to be used later, when the Wagner Act is invoked, to create fink majorities, by clever press propaganda and a skillful exploitation of the "new prosperity." It is not at all necessary to accept William Green's assertion that the automobile strike has won nothing, to realize that it has won only a skirmish.

The victory must be consolidated. It can be consolidated only by redoubled vigilance, expressed in a new and vigorous organization drive. It is clear that the strikers would have won nothing but for Governor Murphy's refusal to implement the Flint injunctions by the use of the Michigan militia. He did indeed refuse to do this, and he was almost certainly backed up in his attitude by the administration. This will be noted down to Roosevelt's credit. It becomes all the more necessary to note what, in effect, has been won.

Candor compels the admission that the administration has won far more than labor. Unions that win strikes mainly by government pressure become prisoners of the government, if the government is not entirely their own. Prisoners, or wards, such unions lose their independence. To-day the government is with them. But to-morrow? Is it so hard, in view of labor's experiences in 1934, in the Weirton strike and the automobile strike, to visualize a government betrayal? This government is avowedly dedicated to the maintenance of a balance between capital and labor. The present victory is given to labor. Is capital to receive the next?

In the negotiations that are now to begin in the automobile industry we must expect the technique of delay and compromise to be pursued. What the administration will do during the negotiations will depend on the continued vigilance of the unions. In the meantime it is worth noting that the mechanism of the Wagner Act, designed to cover strike negotiations, was not invoked. This may be because the administration did not wish to test the constitutionality of the act. It may also be the result of Lewis' fear of testing his majorities in the plants. Failure to use the Wagner Act in this strike and in the Seamen's strike, makes the act virtually a dead letter.

The Floods

The premature, and unexpectedly heavy floods in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys threw into sharp relief the whole problem of flood prevention and soil conservation. The administration had worked out, in the light of earlier floods, an extensive program of flood prevention. This year's floods give it a dramatic moment for the advancement of this program. The president published it with his customary flair for showmanship. It is, so far as a layman can judge it, a wisely conceived long range plan, including reforestation, soil conservation, and the building of floodways and reservoirs. Some experts say that in the light of the latest experience it is already outdated. That it will be adopted goes without saying.

It is in emergencies like the flood that American organizing skill and the American character appear at their best. Yet the flood gave Roosevelt and Congress an opportunity to make a gesture that seems generous, but that is thoroughly reactionary. The president announced, with the agreement of Congress, that he would use *all* the money appropriated for general relief, for the relief of the flood victims, if necessary. This was generally applauded. Yet it should have appeared evident at once that new moneys should have been appropriated. Little has been heard of this plan since it was first broached. The president may have discerned the difficulties inherent in it, and he may have shelved it himself. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that future curtailment of general relief and of work relief will be based on prior necessity of flood relief. It should be borne in mind that flood relief involves the restoration of damaged property; that it proceeds long after the public ceases to be aware of its necessity; and that the flood-stricken areas are influential in the government. Flood relief is essential, but not at the expense of the unemployed in the rest of the country.

The Supreme Court

The disturbance caused by the president's message calling for the reorganization of the Supreme Court unmasks, more than any other circumstance could, the fiction of the "Roosevelt revolution."

Socialists long ago pointed out the reactionary nature of the Supreme Court. Unchecked in its power, irresponsible (in spite of Mr. Dooley's quip about "following the election returns") inevitably composed of elderly men representing the views of a past generation, it stands as an immovable barrier in the way of progress. That its true nature has not been generally revealed sooner flows from the ultra-conservative nature of our government since the Civil War. The changes that did take place, or that were proposed by even the most advanced administration (that of Woodrow Wilson) were conceived as within the traditional framework of capitalist society. When, as in the case of Cleveland's income tax law (1894) the Supreme Court showed its colors, twenty years were needed before the income tax was legalized by constitutional amendment. The one proposal of the Wilson administration that challenged the rights of capital, the attempt to regulate child labor by a statute under the interstate commerce clause of the constitution, was promptly quashed by the Court. The painful Odyssey of the Child Labor Amendment since that time is a perfect illustration of the difficulty of "revolution within the law."

The first substantial challenges to the unlimited freedom of capitalist exploitation came with the NRA and the AAA. The virtues and defects of these measures, in theory and in practice, have been discussed in these pages too often to necessitate repetition. It is enough to point out that, inadequate as they are to curb the predatory nature of capitalist industry, they were bitterly resented as the entering wedge of governmental interference in the sacred rights of private business. A court test was inevitable, and in due time the Supreme Court fulfilled its function as the final bulwark of capitalist privileges, and declared these laws unconstitutional.

The decisions were met with paeans of praise from the reactionary forces. The Court was celebrated as the defender of liberty. The noble, aloof, and impartial nature of its deliberations was widely lauded. But the decisions were also met with the president's resentful phrase about the "horse and buggy age," and with much talk about changes in the powers of the court, and even about amendment to the constitution circumscribing the control of the Court over legislation.

On February 5th the president announced a virtually new judiciary act. The proposed law gives the president the power to call for the resignation of any member of the Court who has passed the age of seventy, and who has been on the bench for ten years. There are six members of the present Supreme Court who, under the proposed law would be eligible for retirement. They would almost certainly not retire. Under the law the president would then have the appointment of six presumably liberal judges.

The proposal was met with a storm of opposition. At first this came from the erstwhile Liberty League, from the Hearst press and from such apologists for capitalism as the New York "Herald Tribune." The opposition professed to see in the move the evolution of the president as a "fascist dictator." Democratic government, it asserted, would be undermined if the last check on the president was removed. Congress, it said, was already a rubber-stamp. The new law would make a rubber-stamp of the Supreme Court. Naturally the opposition was silent on the unchecked and irresponsible nature of the Supreme Court. It did not bring up the orginal usurpation of power by the Court under

Chief Justice Marshall. It said nothing about the fact that the Constitution does not give the Court the power to declare the acts of Congress unconstitutional. It did not point out that the president's proposal is entirely constitutional, inasmuch as that document gives the Congress the right to determine the number of Supreme Court judges, a right it has three times exercised. As a matter of course, the oligarchical dictatorship that has in fact been set up by the Supreme Court was not so much as mentioned by the opposition.

Opposition was not limited to the forces of open reaction. The president's proposal has met with the first open and clear opposition from men in his own ranks. Not only Senators Borah and Glass, but Senators Norris and Clark, heretofore counted as "liberals", have expressed themselves as horrified. Congressman Emanuel Celler, another erstwhile liberal, has announced that he will lead an open fight on the measure on the floor of the House.

The proposal has touched the chief taboo of American political life. The sacro-sanctity of the Supreme Court has become, under careful propaganda carried on chiefly in the schools since the Civil War, an article of faith cutting across both traditional parties. It is assumed that the members of the Supreme Court cease to be human when they assume the judicial robes, and become, like the pope, infallible oracles of super-human wisdom, Even the many 5 to 4 decisions that have studded the ecord of the court in recent years have ıot removed the illusion of infallibility.

There are, of course, men in both parties who would like to see the court curbed—but by Constitutional amendment. They know, of course, that no such amendment can be adopted in less than a generation. Their lip-service to liberalism absolves them from the charge of reaction, and leaves the Court taboo intact.

The Supreme Court question bids fair to become the test of the whole New Deal. How deep does the taboo go? How deep does the authentic desire for economic change go? Even for so limited a change as that represented by Roosevelt? How far is the Democratic majority prepared to go to implement the November mandate? How real was the mandate of the twenty-seven million who voted for Roosevelt? And finally, how long will the president stand up under the most bitter campaign of malignment and slander levelled against any public figure since the days of Lincoln?

To back the New Deal was easy so long as the New Deal meant easy votes. To back it *against* the wishes of the vocal segments of the masses is another story. The vocal sections are the forces of reaction. Will the masses find a voice and make themselves heard above the storm of opposition? And if they do, what will they say?

The change proposed by the president amounts to packing the Court. It is an element of weakness, easily exploited by the opposition, that he sought to hide his purpose by speaking of increasing the "efficiency" of the courts. His purpose could not be hidden in any case. It would have been wiser to admit that he was packing the court; wiser to state *why* he was doing it. Packing the Court is not a new procedure. It has been done before. It has been proposed oftener than it has been done, and proposed by *Republican* presidents. Packing the Courts to effect a given change can be justified on the ground that the process of constitutional amendment is too slow. To be supine and make no change at all is to play into the hands

of the reaction. The reaction wants nothing better than a transfer of public attention from the immediate issue of hours, wages and prices, to the more remote technical and legal issues of Constitutional change. The reactionary argument that to pack the Court is revolutionary will not adversely impress the radical mind. Such an argument obscures the fact that the Court as it is "packs" the government against all fundamental change.

A much more cogent argument is that the reaction as well as the revolution can play at the game of packing. What a "radical" Roosevelt can do, can also be done by a reactionary Landon or Hoover. But this argument comes, not from the reactionaries, who see in it an implied attack on the Court taboo, but from those more radical than the president. While they see the danger in the president's move they will not lend themselves to the reactionary opposition. They will not join in the hue and cry against Roosevelt, the "fascist dictator," even though they cannot wholeheartedly approve of his methods in the present crisis.

The success of the presidential administration turns on the Supreme Court issue. If the president wins, he can reenact the NRA and the AAA. He can, if he so desires, proceed to an extension of his economic and social program. This is the main issue!

If he loses, and if the Supreme Court taboo remains intact, his administration will collapse into frustrated mediocrity. He will be limited to laws sufficiently innocuous to pass the Court, or sufficiently backed up by the popular will to cause the Court to capitulate.

He will be forced to initiate a constitutional amendment either to curb the Court or to extend the powers of Congress to legislate on economic questions. But he will launch such an amendment under unfavorable circumstances, since presumably the "people" will have spoken on the Court issue in Congress.

One thing he will not do, because he cannot. He will not draw from his present plight, either in victory or in defeat, the plain lesson that the situation teaches. Only a socialist can draw that lesson. It is that embattled capital will not give up the battle as long as it has any power to fight. It will not easily give up the Court, since in the Court lies its last hold on the legal machinery that it set up to perpetuate its grip on industry and finance.

From the point of view of the socialist movement it is a most fortunate thing that the Supreme Court issue has arisen now. Socialists have long maintained that the court is the embodied will of capital itself. Capital is now demonstrating that fact to the hilt. Even if the president wins, the Court still remains a potential obstacle to industrial changes. If he loses the swing of labor away from the New Deal and toward independent political action will be quickened.

The Socialist Convention: An Opportunity and a Challenge

Harry W. Laidler

THE convention of the Socialist Party in late March provides the party with a magnificent opportunity to close ranks and unite upon a vigorous and constructive program of action among industrial workers and farmers in behalf of a socialist society.

If the convention is to strengthen the party in its work with mass organizations, the delegates must keep close to the spirit of the call issued by the National Executive Committee.

The convention was not called to discuss all shades of theoretical differences which might exist within the party regarding the exact character of the Socialist Society or the exact manner in which that society is likely to be achieved.

It was not called to give any one group within the party a chance to railroad it into the acceptance of their particular program of effecting the revolution.

It was not called to instruct socialist parties abroad as to the theoretical purity of their tactics which they have adopted in their fight against fascism and war and in behalf of a cooperative world.

If the convention began to give its attention to such discussions and resolutions, it would make merely for further dissension and dissension at a time that calls imperatively for party building.

For we socialists must realize that "theoretical purity" alone cannot bring social change. We must have power and power comes through mass support. To-day we do not have that support. After more than a generation of effort, the Socialist Party in the last election secured only about one out of every 250 votes cast, while the party membership to-day consists of perhaps one out of every 5,000 of the population. Our main task is to reach outside among the great mass who have thus far no connection with Socialism or the radical movement.

We need sound theory. We must be constantly revising our theory in the light of events. We need also a strong organization and constructive action. The March convention should concentrate on the latter.

The convention will be meeting in the Middle West at a time when labor is attempting to organize the basic industries as never before in its history. I am writing this in Michigan, the center of the automobile strike. I have just come from Flint, where the attention of the nation is centered. A couple of years ago, when I visited that city, there seemed little chance for any effective organization among the employees of the General Motors.

When I returned to Flint this week, the atmosphere had been revolutionized. Tens of thousands of automobile workers on strike. Sit-down strikes in four plants, defying General Motors. Wives of the strikers organized in shock brigades. Thousands of auto workers from other cities leaving their jobs to help their fellows on the industrial battle field of the city of the General Motors. Thousands of dollars pouring in daily from

other union centers in aid of the strike. Aggressive and progressive trade union leadership in the city, state and nation, directing strike strategy. Socialists of the type of Powers Hapgood are taking a significant part in the struggle. All of these things indicated the beginning of a new epoch in the American labor movement. One did not need to go further than Fisher plant No. 1, and talk with the "sit-down" strikers, as I did a few hours before Judge Gadola issued his injunction, without realizing something of the new spirit that was beginning to animate the workers.

In this new move to increase the proportion of organized workers from 10 per cent of the nation's employees to a majority and to organize them in strong industrial organizations, the Socialist Party has a rare opportunity for service. At the March convention, we should formulate a practical program for aggressive and efficient cooperation of socialists with the labor movement. We should inspire the party membership to become active in the unions of their trade and industry; to organize unions where none exist; to join with their fellow socialists in ridding the unions of corrupt and inefficient leadership where such exists; and to educate the union membership in the need for independent political action and for the abolition of the profit system.

Our convention will be meeting at a time when the consumers' cooperative movement is securing a new lease of life in this country. Abroad, there has been a close link between the strong cooperative movements of the various countries and the union and political movement of labor. Socialists abroad have encouraged consumers' cooperation. They have never been of the belief that it was the *only* or the *chief* movement in labor's march toward emancipation. They, however, have seen in it certain advantages for the workers.

In the United States there are those in the cooperative movement who regard it merely as a means of lowering prices. There are also those who greatly exaggerate the advantages of cooperation and who regard it as the means whereby the capitalist system may be painlessly transformed into a utopia.

During recent years socialists, through the *Socialist Call* and other publications, have been doing splendid service in combatting both of these points-of-view. Socialists should enter the cooperative movement; should educate cooperators in the realities of the situation and make of the consumers' movement a partner with the trade union, the political and the educational movements of labor in the struggle for power and for an abundant and free civilization. We should bring cooperators into the Socialist Party. In every city, we should assign some of our members to this work. But we should see to it that the energy and devotion given to cooperation does not sap the Socialist Party of its active members; on the contrary, that it brings to Socialism new recruits and to the cooperative movement new vitality and idealism.

The convention is meeting at a time when the talk of a national farmer-labor party is in the air. The success of the Committee for Industrial Organization campaign in organizing the masses of workers on the industrial field will lay a firmer foundation than has hitherto existed for a labor party in this country. The resolution passed at the last meeting of the National Executive Committee in New York regarding a labor party was definitely along the right line. Socialists should cooperate heartily in building genuine farmer-labor movements. We must become a part of a

larger mass movement, work loyally with that movement, and, at the same time, keep our own organization intact, continue socialist education, propaganda and organization with increased vigor.

To remain aloof from a bona fide farmer-labor party is to become an impotent sect. But in joining, in cooperaating in such a party, socialists must not give up their socialist integrity. They must realize that the world is in need of Socialism as at no time in its history. For the alternative to Socialism is further economic chaos, suppression and war.

Where the Socialist Party cannot join with a farmer-labor party and preserve its identity, as in the case of the American Labor Party of New York, the question will arise as to what forms of cooperation between the Socialist Party and other parties of labor should be worked out in the interests of labor and of Socialism.

The Socialist Party is meeting during a period when the threat of war is again in the air. We have ever taken an uncompromising stand against all capitalist wars. We have, in season and out of season, fought against fascism and in behalf of democratic civil rights. We will continue that stand.

Our job at the convention will be to work out a plan for reaching the mass of American people in organized labor groups, in church, fraternal, professional, student and other groups with our message. Our chief attention must be given to ways and means of preventing the country from going into war. We know from sad experience that, if war is declared, every force of government and most sources of propaganda are utilized to the full in regimenting not only the bodies, but the minds of the people of the country, and that, under the powerful pressure of propaganda, millions of lovers of peace within and without the ranks of labor, are bludgeoned into the support of a war. Our main job now is the job of mobilizing workers, farmers and others in a fight against our entrance into war under any pretense whatsoever.

Ours is the one political movement that sees clearly the relation between capitalism and war and fascism. Through the written and spoken word, through contacts with all progressive groups, we must see to it that our position is powerfully presented. We should outline a program along these lines at our Chicago meeting.

We must give far more scientific attention to the best type of organization, to the building up of membership, to the securing of adequate financial support, than in the past. We should secure the most expert advice of our members and sympathizers regarding methods of organization and finance. Organization and finance are at the basis of all of our other activities.

And in our March gathering we should endeavor to arrive at decisions not as a result of the high pressure propaganda of caucus leaders representing minority groups desirous of "putting something across," but through democratic decisions of the majority democratically arrived at. An aggressive, articulate, thoroughly disciplined group may be able to "capture" a convention, as our communist friends in the third period used to capture non-communist organizations of "innocents." But usually the group that does the capturing soon finds that it has merely captured itself, or that, on the rebound, it is itself captured by their awakened opponents.

At a time when, both in fascist and communist countries, we are witnessing the tragic results of the abandonment of democratic methods, we socialists

must hold fast to democracy both in our party machinery and in the development of our larger policies. The principles of democracy and fair play are the principles which, if put into practice, lead to solidarity, cooperation, growth. The principles of dictatorship, of unfair dealings with our fellows, are those which, sooner or later, lead to disintegration and death.

And, finally, in all of our deliberations, we must realize that we are living in the United States—not in Russia, in Spain, in France or any other foreign country. The Socialist Party has for years, since the days of Eugene V. Debs, prided itself on the fact that it spoke the language the workers of America could understand; that it dealt with problems with which American labor was deeply concerned; that it adopted tactics not on the basis of what it may be wise for some party abroad to do, but on the basis of their adaptability to the American scene. We have at times criticized the communist and other movements for planting their bodies in America, but their minds in Moscow.

During the last year, however, in some quarters in our party there has been a tendency to live physically in the United States, but mentally and spiritually abroad; to talk in an esoteric language utterly foreign to the average American worker; to keep the locals' attention so directed to what is happening abroad that our members have had no time or energy left to discuss what they should do to bring about Socialism in the United States.

While an intolerance has at times crept into the socialist press that has had a disastrous effect upon the activity and loyalty of some of our comrades who have borne the brunt of the battle against capitalist exploitation and war during the years that have passed, these trends must be reversed, if the party is in the future, to bring within its ranks large contingents from the nine-tenths of the American workers outside of any working class political party.

The party, I am convinced, is in the process of reversing these trends, and, in the next convention, may be depended upon to lay an ever firmer foundation for intelligent and courageous leadership in behalf of international Socialism among the great masses of our people.

Socialists in the Workers Alliance

Brendan Sexton

PERHAPS no other political question has received so much front page attention recently as the WPA and relief problem. Almost every day, for the past three months, there have been important stories in one or another of the great metropolitan dailies dealing with it in one way or another.

Most of us who were active in the work of organizing the unemployed and relief workers, as well as most socialists, realized that, directly following the election, the Roosevelt administration would drop its paternalistic attitude towards the unemployed, and show its real face as the representative of the owning class, by initiating drastic cuts in the relief standards. Very few, if any, however, expected that the Roosevelt administration would strike with the lightning rapidity with which it did. And it is this writer's impression that the organ-

izations of the unemployed and relief workers were caught somewhat offguard by the speed of Roosevelt's action.

When the workers recovered from their shock, they went quickly into action. Demonstrations, picket lines, sit-ins, sit-downs, which were at least partly spontaneous in their origin, took place all over the country. The climax to these actions was the dramatic sit-down staged by the Artists and the Writers Locals of the Workers Alliance in New York City. It would seem that these sit-ins delivered a telling blow to the plans of the administration and caused it to beat a hasty, if temporary, retreat.

These actions were, in the main, unplanned, and not thought out, but were the result of an unconscious seizure of the organizational apparatus by the rank and file of the organization and the use of it to put through the militant drive. The leadership of the organization—including the writer—did not play an active part in the plans made for these demonstrations, and one is forced to conclude after seeing what happened when the leadership did assert itself that perhaps it was just as well. Ever since they have, the energy of the workers which was so well spent previously has been, despite the efforts of the socialists in the organization, diverted into other less satisfactory channels.

Although demonstrations of one sort or another have been staged in the past three months, the main energies of the Workers Alliance and other groups in this field have not been directed towards the carrying on of sit-ins, sit-downs, etc., such as were staged back in November, but, instead, have been spent in ringing the doorbells of congressmen and senators, getting signatures on petitions, and digging up some prominent or obscure—it mattered little which—poet, writer, doctor, dentist, lawyer, social-worker, to issue a statement telling how the WPA project in his particular field was "socially necessary," and all about how much good work had been done. The basic right of these workers to the jobs which private industry had denied them, and which only the government could give, was almost completely overlooked. An indication of the extent to which the effort to prove that WPA workers are not "boondoglers," and are entitled to their jobs on the basis of the useful work they have done, is the action of a local of the white-collar division of the Workers Alliance in New York which brought a socialist up on charges in the union because he had openly admitted at a meeting of his local that, in his three months on the project, he had done little or no work, because there was no work to do.

Every sort of smoke-screen has been erected in order to give the organizations an appearance of being in action. Calls from the National Office for action have been met in the localities, by the election of telegram committees, the holding of open hearings, the distribution of leaflets, and the holding of only ultra-respectable, lack-lustre demonstrations.

After Roosevelt—taking advantage of the lack of militant activity on the projects—announced his determination to cut the number of WPA workers by 600,000, the Workers Alliance of America called for a national march on Washington. The organizational work for this demonstration was remarkable. More than 3,000 delegates, representing a fairly good cross-section of the country were moved to Washington on January 15th, with only a few weeks' preparation. The action was well-timed and well-planned. It was a necessary one which had to be effective if the WPA workers were to

defeat the plans of the Roosevelt Administration. And, yet, it must be admitted, that the unemployed came away from Washington without winning any substantial victory. It is true that more than 50 members of the House of Representatives lined up behind the program of the Workers Alliance of America, and that for the organization, as such, this is a remarkable step forward, but of immediate gains for the unemployed and project workers, there were few.

While it is true that the Alliance, by and of itself, could not have won a complete victory—it would need the wholehearted support of the trade union movement for this, and it did not get any more that a formal endorsement from that sector—still it could have, it would seem, won at least a partial victory if the right sort of action had been undertaken.

The action had as its main focal point in the Capitol, the national office of the Chamber of Commerce. Its whole tone and orientation was of conciliation with the liberal elements—amongst whom the President seemed to be included. The fire of its drive was not turned directly on the administration, which had announced the cuts, but was directed at the "reactionaries" who, we were assured, were now "sneaking in the back door of the White House after having been defeated in the election."

It would seem, that all the workers had to do was to exert enough pressure to counterbalance that of the reactionaries and all their problems would be solved. Roosevelt was held up as a gentleman who, like a reed, yielded to the slightest pressure from either side. If the pressure from the right was stronger he would go right, if from the left he would go left. The fundamental class bias of the administration was left out of the picture completely. The President, we were given to understand, stood in the middle of the road and could be expected to leap whichever way the wind blew hardest.

We were told to put our faith in the "progressive elements" in Congress who were fighting for our program. They were the collective Moses who would lead us out of the wilderness. All thought of independent action by the workers themselves directly against the President, who had announced the cuts, was forgotten. The 3,000 workers who came to Washington to demand bread, went about the city trying to scare the reactionaries into silence. If that could be accomplished, the President then would have been free to take the liberal, humanitarian course, which he would like to follow, if only the Liberty Leaguers would let him be.

Such a line was, of course, ineffective. Practically, the only gains made were by the Alliance as an organization, which gained respect for the brilliant job which it had accomplished in bringing so many delegates, so many miles on such short notice. The project workers gained very little concretely by this action.

That this line was followed in Washington was, indeed, no accident. The preliminary build-up for the march in the localities where the communists and their cohorts control the organization was such as inevitably to give the demonstration a certain stamp. For example, in New York, where a demonstration had been held one week previously, the whole emphasis was placed on lining up the progressive forces for a death struggle with the reactionaries; on showing how really useful was the work being done on the projects; on convincing the public of the necessity for their continuance, instead of exposing the wastefulness for which the administration and the system under which we live are re-

sponsible

The whole orientation of the communists, in recent months, has been what one could expect, a natural outgrowth of the line which they followed in the campaign:—a line of lesser-evilism, of unity between all progressive forces against the reactionaries, and a concommittant submersion of the independent role of the working class.

People's Frontism has so completely permeated every section of the Comintern that it would seem its parties are unable to follow a line of independent working class action any place at any time. Its application of that line has resulted in the actions briefly outlined here. The whole attitude of the communists towards the Alliance seems to be determined by an eagerness to apply the line even in this field, where the outstanding representative of the "progressives," Roosevelt, is the open, unashamed enemy of the workers involved.

Socialists, on the other hand, have sought to maintain the independence of the organization. They have sought to have it participate in direct actions at the local and national administrative offices. They have not rejected the support of the Progressive Bloc in Congress (of which, by the way, our friend Bill Lemke is a member) rather, they have sought it, but have placed it in its proper secondary position.

The communists in their determination that the organization shall follow their line, have gone in for a sort of inverted third-periodism, which has resulted in the persecution of almost every political element in the organization which opposes them. They have in some instances permitted, or evidenced a desire to permit, the socialists to continue in leadership where they control; but they have demanded as a price for this leadership a complete sacrifice of independence on the part of the socialists, or have so completely hamstrung them, and limited their powers as to make their participation in the leadership impossible without a complete sacrifice of personal and organizational integrity. In short, they are willing to have us in sections where they control, provided only that they have the power to name the socialist who shall be placed in the leadership, and power to make of him nothing more than a front, whose presence on the scene will permit them to claim that they favor unity.

Under these conditions socialists cannot serve in the leadership. If there is to be unity there must be genuine unity; unity not which entails the cramming down socialists' throat of every point which the Communist Party thinks important, but unity on the basis of mutual agreement and cooperation. If such unity cannot be established we must be free to go our way, criticizing every action which we consider inimical to the best interests of the organizations, not forced to take responsibility for these actions before the membership.

We cannot be associated in a leadership, which, in certain localities, has shown an increasing disregard for the will of the membership; which arrogates to the top officers powers which never were theirs; which openly persecutes every minority group—while giving lip-service to the rights of such groups. In short, we cannot be associated in a leadership which seeks to build a bureaucracy behind the veil of progressivism.

On the other hand, we cannot carry on the organization as we have in the past. We shall never be able to influence the Workers Alliance—or any other workers' organization, for that matter—on the basis of the activity which we, as a party, have carried on. We cannot

win workers on the basis of convincing them by words that ours is the correct program. Only the most progressive and intelligent can thus be won. The only way we can win them to our side is by demonstrating *in action* that we are the people who are trying to build a powerful, unified, democratic union capable of winning for them their immediate demands.

We must be the leaders in recommending concrete plans for actions. We must be the leaders in the organization of such actions. We must be the leaders in the sit-ins and on the picket lines. We must be the leaders in building new locals, in recruiting new members. We must be the leaders in the fight against bureaucratizing the organization, and in making the units which we control the most democratic in the whole organization. We must be the leaders in safeguarding the rights of all minority groups. (And this very definitely includes the rights of communists where they are in a minority.)

Ours must be the fight for recognition of the principle that all WPA workers are basically unemployed, and that their fight for jobs must be primarily on the basis of their need for work, not on the basis of the "simply grand" work which has been accomplished by their project. The fight for closer unity between the employed and unemployed—to which our party has given only lip-service, even where so-called left-wingers control the party trade-union machinery—must be our fight. We must be scrupulous disciplinarians within the organization even when we disagree with its line. Our political fight must be confined to the organization so far as possible; and must never, on our initative, be taken outside of it.

In all of this we must be careful to eschew any indulgence in the tactics of "third-period" communists. Because they have discriminated against us where they control it does not follow that we must practice the same discrimination where we control. Then, too, we shall have to be careful that our comrades in their revulsion against the communist policy of complete overemphasis of legislative action, do not indulge in wild and wooly adventurism. The demonstrations which we run must be well-timed, well-planned and well-spaced. It is necessary always to keep in mind that the unemployed are the most worn out section of the working class. They are physically unable to carry through actions on the same scale as the employed workers. Our demonstrations must be run for adequate cause; for demands which we have a reasonable chance of attaining, and behind which the workers will rally. It will be criminal adventurism if we lead the workers into action, during which they may be clubbed and jailed, on the basis of demands the necessity for the winning of which they do not recognize.

This last course, of demonstrations whether or no the workers wanted them, was the policy of the C. P. during its third period, and it resulted in the loss of many thousands of good workers to the unemployed movement.

Our party's influence in the Workers Alliance is doomed to extinction unless such a program can be effectively carried out. The writer knows that innumerable comrades will agree with the general line taken in this article, but he also knows that many of these same comrades, who have in the past indicated their agreement with this position, will probably in the future continue to take the patronizing position towards the Alliance which they have in the past.

None of them can continue to criticize the work of our comrades within the or-

ganization, while remaining absolutely impervious to its needs and to our comrades' everyday problems. Our party must make up its mind that it is going wholeheartedly to assist the comrades in this work.

Some Problems of Party Organization

Robert Delson and Louis Mann

Party Theory and Structure

IT would not be difficult to point out the great theoretical differences that existed between the Socialist Party and the Old Guard. Yet, essentially there is no very significant difference between the structure of the party to-day and before the split. In fact, we have inherited and continued a structure that was fitted to one outlook, and hoped that by some inner pressure it would be converted into another type befitting our present position—something which has not and could not have occurred.

Party structure is not a self-sufficient mechanism divorced from perspective. One type of program begets its kind of machinery, necessarily different from other types, or else there is confusion. The Old Guard believed that through the process of verbal education and of electoral campaigns, conversion and support would grow increasingly. As a consequence of these, the various legislatures would prove more and more responsive and pass legislation benefitting the working class. These reforms would ultimately lead to such great accessions that capitalism would be voted out of existence. With this in mind, they properly emphasized and built neighborhood branches. These were, primarily, occupied with forums throughout the year and an intensive electoral campaign before election times. Other activities, such as union, youth, children, were piously favored but not seriously pushed. Some kinds of mass work, among the unemployed, for example, were positively frowned upon. All of which was all right if you believed that within the framework of capitalism, you could achieve Socialism.

Those of us who look upon the Socialist Party as having another goal in mind, have to consider carefully an entirely different type of instrument. More than that, such consideration must somehow or other generate very quickly a widespread change in the whole party structure. Otherwise we shall continue as an organization which apparently mouths phrases of one position, and possess an organization which necessarily implies quite a different perspective. There is only one fundamental goal for a revolutionary movement, namely, the overthrow of the existent state power, and setting up in its stead the state power of the working class. The nature of this goal flows directly from the Marxian theory of the state.

The capitalist state can be swept away only by eliminating these institutions and setting up others to serve the interests of the working class. The smashing of the existing state power and the setting up of an independent workers' power can not be achieved by a gradual accumulation of reforms or even a quick parliamentary victory. The ultimate reliance of the workers must be on extra-parliamentary processes, reliance on their own organized

forces. It is necessary, therefore, not only to create these working class forces, but to imbue them with the ultimate objective of the working class. The masses will never participate in this revolutionary struggle and will never set up these forces unless they become fully conscious of the fact that they are exploited by the existing order and that this exploitation is through the instrumentality of the capitalist state, that is to say, unless they become conscious of the fact that they must fight against and overthrow the state.

It is the great and indispensable contribution of the Socialist Party to help the workers gain a consciousness of their exploitation and of the necessity of this struggle. Does it require more than the mere assertion to prove that a political movement which sets itself such mighty tasks requires an organizational structure as different from that of a party of reform as are our political principles.

"If it is not able to lead the masses, link itself closely to them, then it is not a Party, and is good for nothing, even if it calls itself a Party." Where are our fields of activity? Immediately, how shall we work in them? We must recognize that every place of work, habitation, education, recreation and all of the other institutions under capitalist control will reflect that control.

One becomes class-conscious not only through speeches, as one might infer from the major preoccupation of the branches with the increasingly futile party forums. Of greater possibility is that which impinges upon the lives of the workers with unending pressure—the job, wages, working conditions, unemployment, sickness, and housing conditions. What better way of arousing workers than by helping them to formulate their own immediate demands and fighting for them? Compare that with the modern counterpart of Utopian Socialism as evidenced by our branches, little churches that seek communicants who, it is believed, would be converted if they but attended to our message.

No, if we intend to be effective we must root ourselves in mass work, and of that, making speeches is but a minor, very minor part. The most important fields in which we must operate are trade unions, farm, sharecroppers, and unemployed organizations, and consumers' groups that face the problems of public utilities, housing, the frauds in quantity and quality of food, clothing, drugs, etc., and the general problems of education, recreation and health. For all of these we shall have to work in either already existing organizations or create new ones. The problem of the Negro will have to be confronted with the realism of activity and not of remote sanctimoniousness. It is not enough to say that we view the status of the Negro as that of any other workers. It isn't an accurate estimate. The Negro is subjected to an additional mode of exploitation because of his race and hence calls for other and more insistently militant expressions to meet the particular modes of repression. Not to see that and attempt to meet that by special types of campaigns and organizations is to forget what Marx aptly said about us; that the white man will not be free until the Negro is.

If the above is a correct summary of what we should aim for, with that as a basis, the next step is to consider immediate structural applications. The following is a list of some of these that seem to us as among the most important.

1. **Party Line.** We cannot hope to have an intelligent membership, not so much as to mention a following, if we ourselves don't take a clear, unequivocal position on every important problem fac-

ing the working class. The position must be so stated and so arrived at that it will be completely assimilated by the members so that they can push it in every field of their activity and that means wherever they are—there can no longer be part time or part place members.

2. **Extension of Leagues and Branches in Mass Organizations.** The present league organization is not enough and is not efficient. A league consists of comrades of the same industry, profession, cultural, recreational, fraternal or cooperative group. Besides their neighborhood branch work these comrades are supposed to work in these other places too. Inevitably there are two consequences from this pulling in different directions, for the branch demands as much of one's time as one will spare and so will the league. Either the league never begins to function, for it is too big a job to be handled halfheartedly or the comrades doing league work become so involved that they rarely attend branch functions. Either neighborhood work, or union work, or any other mass activity work is so big a job that the time cannot be divided without a consequent loss in efficiency. Irritations must occur when one is put under equally important units in competition for the services and support at the same time. The objection to functional branches,—that they would divorce the members from the mainstream of party activity—is inaccurate. If these leagues were converted into branches with organizers and other officers who participate in meetings where directives for the whole party are considered, members of functional branches would be made acquainted with the day by day work of the party. There is nothing that a neighborhood branch does that the other cannot do. Workers in trades or in other permanent fields of association offer as reasonable a geography of activity as any neighborhood. Leagues should be only an initial step where there aren't enough comrades to form a branch, or for various reasons where it would be undesirable.

3. **New Definition of Neighborhood Work.** Our old work in the neighborhood was more nominal than real and so it is to-day. The work of the neighborhood branch should not deal with nebulous alternatives to vague abuses or even general insecurity. It should be organized around the immediate needs of the people in the neighborhood. These would include housing, cost of living, school conditions, recreational facilities, care of unemployed in the vicinity, organization of the factory and other workers. Broader campaigns covering a city (against sales-tax) or state (milk problem) or nation (Supreme Court) might be the basis for involving local organizations at our initiative. Electoral work becomes then another and not necessarily the most important part of our work. In neighborhood work, to be effective, our members will have to join or create local organizations whose members we can arouse and lead. To expect to conduct local campaigns without having our members within these organizations, and the members thereof sympathetic because of the work of our comrades, is a futile hope. And we don't involve these other groups in campaigns merely by invitation. Only by the previous preparation through the work in the neighborhood organizations can that be done.

4. **All members must be active.** Belonging to the party to-day is, for many, merely a matter of membership card and dues. This too will have to be subjected to new definition. Strictly speaking we belong to the Socialist Party

only to the extent that we have identified ourselves with its activities. If we have assumed serious party obligations and carry them out properly then we are serious and proper members of the party. Otherwise we are nominal members, in more than one way an obstacle, and a diluter of the party's morale. Of course the activity of the party will have to extend its gamut so that it allow for appeals to the particular abilities and imagination of all the members instead of a dead levelling of activity to such electoral work as canvassing and leaflet distribution. It is far from satisfactory to have comrades active in working class movements who are not checked in any way by proper party units. Whether it be trade unions unemployed groups, cooperatives, youth work, educational or other kinds of organizations, there cannot exist insulated fields where socialists work among workers, without party direction. Approach should not be laid down artificially by committees from above. Comradely discussion on the part of all comrades in the same field under the supervision of the proper party body should lead to the development of a line on all important questions of policy. Once decided by the majority in such fashion all comrades within the field should be bound.

5. **Finance.** Limitations of space will force but a brief comment. Members must recognize that membership in a party like ours is not comparable to lodge membership. Dues will have to be graduated according to salary and means. Bargain rates like single dues for husband and wife should depend not on the husband-wife relationship, but the ability to pay. Our work in peripheral organizations as mentioned before, should relieve the many demands for funds. The unending demands to which the faithful who attend party meetings have been subjected must cease.

6. **Discipline.** The basis of socialist discipline is the recognition of the basic fact that in facing the capitalist state with its tremendous machinery of coercion, our work is futile unless unified. Within the party there must be room for discussion and disagreement. Outside the party we must present one front determined in a democratic way. With the present condition of the party, to attempt to create unity of action thru disciplinary procedure as the main instrument is well nigh futile. If our party machinery begins to function in line with the party position, the dissidents will either be convinced of the need for unity of action or withdraw. Bludgeoning won't serve our purpose.

7. **More Opportunities for Membership Participation and Expression.**— Membership meetings for locals and branches should occur frequently enough for the presentation of the diverse positions on all important issues. Closed membership meetings should be regular and distinguish the educational technique for the member from that of the novice (not as to-day—having one type for all, and serving none) and sympathizer. More inner party pamphlets, bulletins and magazines must be produced. Regular meetings of party functionaries not for the purpose of being told what to do but for cooperative critical estimate of the current activity must be held. Because of the situation of the party to-day, to allow for democratic expression of all positions, the stringent time requirements for party positions should be lessened drastically in the representative bodies of the party.

8. **Centralization and Departmentalization.** To state that a Socialist Party that allows for forty-eight autonomous divisions is anomalous is to be very mild.

But one position for all states and locals will have to be forged on the issues of the day. The official position should be the only public position of the party. To carry out the party line, the national officials will have to be empowered to coordinate and unify activity in respect to union, educational, propaganda, youth, children's work, and so on right down the line. For each a national secretary probably will be necessary. That does not mean curbing local initiative (shades of the states rights arguments). It is a simple recognition of the United States as a capitalist economy with national forces compelling us in certain directions, which can be challenged only by similarly counter-drawn national policies and practice of the working class.

Whatever be the particular units of organization we set up, let us keep in mind, as impatient as we may be to push forward, that our work must be fruitless unless, in addition to the above, we keep in mind that all such units must possess the following, or prove inevitably a failure.

There must at all times be present in all the units of our work whether they be branches or leagues:

1. A nucleus of members who clearly understand the party's position on all important questions.

2. A nucleus of comrades with organizational skill (conferences, institutes, schools must be started now to train our members).

3. Enough competent comrades willing and able to carry out the planned activities at least with some chance of growing influence.

These are but some of the necessary steps that the coming convention must take if it is to put the party in the path indicated by the NEC at its last meeting when it said:

"There can be no Socialism without the definite organization of socialist forces. The Socialist Party is an imperative necessity of socialist progress. We shall not drift into a desirable new world—we must build it and build it together. Whatever the political development of the immediate future in America may be, the Socialist Party is essential. It is essential if there is to be no national farmer-labor party, and equally essential to the proper development of any such party which may appear. It has a role to play now and in the future which cannot be taken by a farmer-labor party. In the midst of the coming changes and developments in the long-familiar patterns of American labor, the socialist ideal will lose its constructive revolutionary character and degenerate into a vague and futile reformism unless upheld by an effective and growing Socialist Party, doing its work harmoniously within the various mass organizations which the working class will construct . . .

"In order to carry forward our task of building Socialism, each member of the party must function as a responsible unit in work toward a common goal. Activity in the various mass organizations must be directed by the party in accordance with a consistent national policy and program. In the interests of concerted action, it will be necessary for party members to take common counsel, and whenever circumstances warrant, form Socialist Leagues and caucuses." *

It is good socialist doctrine applied to ourselves to say that mechanism greatly determines product. If the introductory statement of objectives is correct, we cannot accomplish it by incantation. We will have to assume the responsibility for the flexibility of making the necessarily great changes in organization.

*This statement is correct but it should be mandatory.

Book Reviews

TWO PAMPHLETS

I have before me two pamphlets. One is a publication of the Communist Party under the title "Appeal to Socialists." In

a whining, hypocritical style it asks socialists to split their party and to liquidate it on the ground that the Communist Party wishes "to help you in the task of saving and building your party." The pamphlet, which is being distributed gratis, reviews the policies, the actions and the internal struggles of the Socialist Party "for the purpose of strengthening the united front of the workers and the front of the people, and hastening the day when our two parties will merge into one mass political party of the American working class."

The Communist Party to-day has only one policy—the development of the peoples front. To this end it has sacrificed its revolutionary tradition, its integrity and its honor. The Socialist Party on the other hand, has remained true to the time-tested revolutionary slogan "No compromise—no political trading!" The fury with which the Communist Party rages because we do not surrender to the opportunism which, truth to tell, has been the mainspring of its actions since October 1917, is amusing, if slightly boring.

During the Third Period the Communist Party developed the manoeuvre of "the united front from below." In practice this meant an effort to win away the membership of the Socialist Party by painting its leaders as "social fascists" and as "betrayers of the working class." After the Seventh Congress of the Comintern (1935) these tactics were abandoned and a policy of fawning upon the Socialist Party leaders and members was adopted. Since bootlicking has failed, the policy of the "united front from below" has been resurrected. In the present pamphlet the entire appeal is to members against their "leaders." The editorial board of the "Socialist Call," the National Office, Norman Thomas and Trotskyists are nominated the "leaders." Their evil machinations are responsible for the failure of the Socialist Party to rush into the united front, into the labor party and into the people's front.

In the recent amusing La Guardia-Hitler episode, the Nazi press betrayed an illuminating inability to understand that the government at Washington could not suppress freedom of speech, and could not, even if it would, remove the mayor of a city from office under any circumstances. The present pamphlet betrays a similar inability on the part of the Communist Party to understand the functioning of a non-monolithic, non-totalitarian party. It shows a ludicrous failure to realize that the editorial board of the "Socialist Call," the personnel of the National Office, and even Norman Thomas would not be where they are if the membership did not substantially share their views. The Socialist Party concept of "leaders" as expression of membership opinion is in sharp contrast to the Communist Party concept of a "line" handed down from above.

The Communist Party tacticians cannot (or perhaps are not permitted to) refrain from dragging the issue of Trotskyism into their present attack on the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party, their argument runs, is the prisoner of the Trotskyites. The Trotskyites are "self-confessed traitors and assassins;" they are "fascists" and all the other pleasant things that the Communist Party called the Socialist Party in the Third Period. For the Socialist Party to associate with these pariahs is to contaminate the party. The aim of the Trotskyites is to wreck the party. To save ourselves we must, says the Communist Party, expel the Trotskyites, accept the mythology of the Moscow Trials, join the peoples front move-

ment—and liquidate.

The trouble with this argument is, first, that only three short years ago we heard that the S. P. consisted of "social fascists" and "betrayers of the workers." Why should we now take the word of the C. P. that the Trotskyites are these things?

Then, we do not accept the myth of Trotsky's guilt. The stench of the Moscow trials is still in our nostrils. We cannot, and will not, associate ourselves with those who are responsible for the extorted confessions, and for the parody of civilized judicial procedure that goes under the name of "justice" in Stalin's Moscow. We cannot, and will not, associate ourselves with those who must make obeisance to Stalin before they speak or write.

Finally we are not the prisoners of the Trotskyites. They would be the first to laugh at such an assertion. Our policy of "No compromise," as the C. P. *leaders* know, goes back to the Henry George campaign in 1884. Only once, in 1924, in the La Follette campaign did we violate it, greatly to the regret of all socialists. Our labor party policy is our own. Even our refusal to accept the Moscow trials at face value stems, not from the Trotskyites in our midst, but from a socialist prejudice in favor of a more realistic treatment of evidence, and from our experience with Soviet and C. P. concepts of honor and of fair play. In saying this I do not repudiate the Trotskyites, nor accept the C. P. decree that we must expel them. They came into the party in good faith. They have a right to work in the party for their views. There has been no evidence that they refuse to accept a party decision. To expel them at the behest of the Communist Party would be a craven surrender.

The present pamphlet, for all its brazen impudence, for all its perversion of history, and because of the dishonesty of its intentions, will fail of its purpose. Its very existence defeats that purpose. Just as an invading army tends to solidify people of various opinions in the face of the enemy, so this unwarranted invasion into the internal problems of the Socialist Party will unite the membership against the hypocrisy of the Communist Party.

The second pamphlet is an official publication of the Socialist Party of Wisconsin. It is the work of Paul Porter. It is called "Which Way for the Socialist Party?"

Paul Porter has long been an advocate of the united front with the Communist Party. He is now editor of "Kenosha Labor." He is apparently the spokesman for those who virtually liquidated the Socialist Party of Wisconsin in order to join with the LaFollette progressives (only to be snubbed for their pains) and with more dubious elements in the formation of the Wisconsin Federation, an approach to a labor party.

His pamphlet contains a pompous and inadequate review of the history of the Socialist Party since 1901. This summary, with a few additions, is essentially a repetition of William Z. Foster's pamphlet published in 1936, "The Crisis in the Socialist Party." It is in the main a jeremiad to the effect that the Socialist Party, once strong, is now weak and growing weaker. The cause for its weakness is its sectarianism. It has in no way influenced the course of the labor movement; it has produced no literature. It has degenerated into a feeble sect and its future, unless it mends its ways, is that of the Socialist Labor Party.

How shall we mend our ways? Porter knows. We must expel the Trotskyites; we must join a united front with the C. P.; we must join the peoples

front movement, which in America takes the special form of the farmer labor party; we must work for an international peoples front. If to do this we must liquidate the Socialist Party, why then we must liquidate the Socialist Party. We must, if necessary, as in Florida, enter other parties, e. g. the Democratic Party, "on a disciplined basis." We must change our war policy. "If war comes it will be our duty to render all possible moral and financial support to the people of whatsoever nation who are fighting fascism—just as we are now doing in the case of Spain."

In simpler words, to please Porter we must cease to be a Socialist Party. He would have us give up our "sectarianism" by which he means our socialist principles. He would have us adopt a policy of opportunist activism. The only socialists for whom he expresses any admiration are for some who have worked directly in the new mass movements,—in the Workers Alliance, in the American Student Union, in the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. Not for Paul Porter to inquire into the nature of their actions. Action for its own sake seems to be his criterion, although he must know that the *nature of action* is determined by a theoretical position, and that *action* alone can be reactionary as well as revolutionary.

Porter's position is the result of bad socialist training. He is the author of the utopian "Commonwealth Plan." He has the extrovert's impatience with thought. A thoughtful analysis looks to him like useless hair-splitting. What he does not realize is that all of the socialist theory is the result of participation in and observation of an historic process. As the class struggle unfolded, in the course of the industrial revolution, it created the socialist theories. Now he would have us throw overboard all that we have learned, and return—to what? To an *unprincipled* participation in the new mass movements.

The new manifestations in the world of labor—the C. I. O., the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, the Workers Alliance, are all of them important. The Socialist Party is at work in all of them. But to do this work it is not necessary to throw aside all that the movement has learned since 1800. We can help the new mass movements best by giving them of our experience, by interpreting their experience in the light of the history of the working class. We can do this only by participating in their struggles. We cannot do it at all if we lose our identity.

Porter leans heavily not only on Foster's pamphlet, but on the "Appeal to Socialists" reviewed above. He is ready to accept the whole of the C. P. program. The logic of his position brings the Wisconsin Socialist Party long devoted to reformistic parliamentarism, and the Communist Party with its record of union smashing and of wild revolutionary romanticism together into one camp. This would be ludicrous if it were not also tragic.

Porter's pamphlet will have no more influence among the rank and file than the C. P. documents from which it stems. His utopian activism and the utopian opportunism of the C. P. may be superficially attractive to the inexperienced. It is, of course, to the politically inexperienced that these pamphlets are addressed. But the membership of the Socialist Party is too well grounded to be more than grimly amused by these attempts from within and from without to bring about the dissolution of the party.

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